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THE FIELD AND STREAM READER

THE FIELD and STREAM READER



*By a Host of Contributors
from the Magazine's Begin-
ning to the Present*

Garden City, New York

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INTRODUCTION

IN THE HALF CENTURY that *Field & Stream* magazine has appeared it has included just about every conceivable approach to life and sport, wild and tame, in the world of nature. Nor have variety and abundance been limited to subject matter, for in each contributor's approach to a subject there has been something personal. Among the articles and stories, some were nostalgic, others charged with excitement, some were explorative, others chiefly informative.

In assembling under one cover what we have felt were the best of these pieces, we have tried to include something of interest to everyone who has learned to love the out-of-doors. In fact, we have even included a piece on that fascinating place, the attic, for those days when nature holds back her beneficence and pours. We hope every choice rings a bell with some reader, and we feel sure that some of the choices will ring bells that the reader has never heard before. If this happens, we will put on our comfortable walking shoes, arouse our favorite dog from his place, and venture out into the fields and along the streams, content with life.

THE FIELD AND STREAM READER

IN THE MOON OF PAINTED LEAVES¹

Alaska—Moose Hunter's Paradise

By RUSSELL ANNABEL

WHEN AUTUMN DAYS turn crisp and chill, and cottonwoods flame yellow along the wilderness stream courses; when the hillsides are bizarrely tinted with the crimson, copper and gold of frost-painted aspen and birch, and the mountains sheer bold and clear-cut against the sweet blue curve of the sky; when the last of the deer-flies and no-see-yums have gone, and the first great, round, orange hunter's moon has waxed to its full—then it's time to go moose hunting in Alaska.

Sheep hunting is great sport, bear hunting is packed with adventure and thrills, and there is a definite kick in risking your neck climbing the windy crags of the goat country—but for downright fun, I'll take a moose hunt any old time. Like grouse shooting, it's a sport that goes with bright leaves tingling down through the branches of old trees, with quiet noonday watches on sun-drenched hillsides, with cautious sallies through the shadowy green-gold enchantment of deep forest aisles, and with campward horseback rides in the purple, star-shot dusk of mountain evenings. It is a sport for the man who appreciates the wilderness at its best, who has an eye for color and beauty—and yet it also has its taut, pulse-quickenning moments.

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In a first-rate moose country you don't hunt moose—you concentrate on selecting a suitable trophy. During a two weeks' hunt you probably will look over from fifty to a hundred bulls before finding one that strikes you and your guide as measuring up to trophy standards.

You spot a bull with your glasses, crawl as close as you can and do your level best to estimate the spread of the animal's antlers, the number of points, and the width of the palms. Usually this is a difficult task, as nine chances out of ten the bull will be in an alder thicket or lying down in tall grass, so that only one of his antlers is visible. Or else he'll be moving about in the brush in such a manner that only one antler comes into view at a time, with the result that you are unable to tell at any given moment whether you are looking at the right horn or the left.

Watching the wind carefully lest it shift treacherously and betray your presence, you crawl still closer, determined to get a good look at the bull's head if it takes all day. You have your binoculars in one hand and your rifle in the other; and between avoiding noisy twigs and dead leaves and trying to keep your sling-strap swivel from tinkling on rocks, you are very busy indeed.

At last, when you are as close as anybody could reasonably hope to get, you settle down for some serious work with the binoculars. The bull still persists in facing the other way, with his head half hidden in an alder clump, and you are just wondering whether it wouldn't be a good idea to jump him and take a chance on estimating his head on the fly when a cow walks into view. Your guide at once scrooches down flat and tries to look like a piece of the scenery, muttering under his breath about blank-blank cows that are always popping up from nowhere at just the wrong moment.

The cow, summer-fat and sleek as a seal, browses a moment at the rim of the thicket, and you hear the sharp snip of her teeth as she bites off the tough alder twigs. Suddenly she raises her head; her big ears turn forward; she stops chewing; she is

looking straight at you. You hold your breath and freeze as motionless as an owl-hunted rabbit, but it's no good. The cow wheels abruptly and dives into the thicket. You see her drifting through the tangled brush like a brown phantom, neck outstretched, head down to part the alders.

The bull swivels around slowly, and starts walking toward you. His neck hair rucks up, and his little, deep-set eyes flare green as switch lamps. He gives a series of deep grunts—*agh-r-r-r uh, agh-r-r-r uh*—and grits his teeth with a peculiarly unpleasant sound.

You can see both antlers now, and you flash a glance at your guide, who shakes his head and stands up with no further attempt at concealment. The bull halts, and you are seized with a well-nigh uncontrollable impulse to begin shooting. But your guide catches your arm and says, "The brow points are haywire. They don't match."

The head had looked like a record-breaker to you, but now, taking a closer look at it, you see that the brow points are poorly matched—the right one angles off crookedly, and the left is a mere tine, not even forked. All this has taken place in a few seconds. Before it even occurs to you to get out your camera for some close-up snapshots the bull turns and goes crashing through the brush, making more noise than a dozen wild steers breaking through a mesquite jungle.

You draw a deep breath, the first one in some moments, and give your guide a happy grin. You feel like an old-timer now. You are an initiate trophy hunter. You have passed up an antlered bull that you could have killed.

Perhaps, if you are lucky, you may see a fight between two bulls. If you do, the brute savagery of the spectacle will stick in your memory as long as you live.

Young Johnny Snowden of Memphis and I were riding along an old grizzly trail at the headwaters of Chicaloon River, on the Kenai Peninsula, one autumn afternoon. Up ahead we heard a great banging and clashing of antlers. We tied the horses, got out our movie camera, and eased up the trail to find out what

was going on. In a little opening, under a wide-armed cottonwood tree, two old bulls were going at it hammer and tongs.

The battle had apparently been in progress for some time, as the ground was cut up with hoof marks and both bulls were weary and bleeding from a score of wounds. As neither carried an especially good head, we maneuvered for a grandstand seat and began filming the fray. The bulls separated, stood glaring at each other a moment, and then, moved by a common impulse, rushed together with a crash that sent both of them to their knees. The one that recovered first reared up like a horse and struck two slashing, pile-driver blows with his front hoofs.

The bull on the ground rolled half over under the impact but staggered to his feet before the other could gore him and drove in swiftly, head low. He caught his adversary off balance, and the weight of his charge slammed the bull hard against the cottonwood tree. I heard the wind leave the pinned bull's lungs with an explosive whoof as he raked sidewise with his antlers and struggled desperately to avoid the savage, lunging attack. Somehow he got free, but he was all through fighting—thoroughly conquered. Mouth wide open, ears hanging down, he lurched across the opening and disappeared in the alders.

The victor stood staring after him a moment, and then walked off in the opposite direction. A cow appeared from nowhere—a habit cows have—and followed after him. Johnny, a football and prize-fight fan, told me later that in order to keep from rooting during the battle he had been forced to bite his tongue.

In judging a moose head, be particularly careful to notice the angle at which the antlers are fastened to the animal's skull. Some antlers have a backward sweep, and these, however branchy and massive, will seldom show a gratifying tape reading. Look for a bull whose antlers reach straight out from either side of his head, and keep a sharp lookout for tines projecting beyond the ends of the palms.

Often a medium-wide head is raised into the record class by one of these outward-reaching freak tines. Gunn Buckingham and I took such a trophy on the Kenai in 1930, and it won

mention in the book of record heads. A single tine grew out from the left antler, extending a full 6 inches beyond the end of the palm, with the result that the tape showed a fraction under 70 inches in spread for what otherwise would have been a very average trophy. For this reason, if you can help it, never pass up a bull without viewing his antlers from every angle.

A good method of estimating the spread of a bull's antlers is to compare them with the length of the animal's body. A large bull will measure around 110 inches from nose to tail. If the spread of the antlers is greater than half the bull's total length, he's worth further attention.

For some extraordinary reason, few bulls with heavy heads have bells. It is possible that this growth disappears with age, or it may be that it freezes off or is torn off in fighting; but whatever the reason, it is a fact that a long bell usually indicates a poor head.

In New York, a few years ago, I saw a splendid moose trophy on an office wall, and was struck by the fact that a bell at least 14 inches long depended from the throat of the mount. Curious, I went in and asked the owner about it, and he confessed that he had taken the bell from a smaller head and had it fastened to the one on the wall.

Without any desire to become involved in a profitless argument regarding the caliber and make of rifle best suited to moose hunting, I can say that the cleanest kills I have seen were made with the .30-06, shooting 220-grain soft-nose ammunition, and the .270, shooting 130-grain open points. In these cases the bulls were all shot high in the shoulders. None moved out of their tracks. A bull shot through the barrel will often travel for hours, and in brushy country will usually make a clean getaway.

As a youngster, I once had an experience that taught me, once and for all, the advisability of holding fire until I could place my shots properly. Scouting along the bottom of Slaughter Gulch, near the foot of Kenai Lake, I spotted a thundering big bull walking across an open snow-slope about five hundred yards

above me. Instead of trying to get closer, I sat down on a drift and started shooting.

The fifteenth shot hit him somewhere in the hip, and stopped him. I had two cartridges left. To get up to the bull I would have to climb a long, broken, juniper-grown ridge, and part of the time would be unable to see the animal.

Deciding to anchor him where he was, I fired the remaining two shots, and scored a hit with one of them. I climbed the mountain as quickly as I could through the loose snow; but when I reached the spot where I had last seen the bull, he was gone. For two hours I followed his trail, and at last found him backed up in a juniper thicket, waiting for me—weak, crippled, but still ready and willing to fight.

Having no more ammunition, I went cave man and made a spear by lashing my hunting knife to an alder sapling. I have never been proud of what happened during the next few minutes. The bull did his best to get me, and floundering about in the snow I tried to land a fatal thrust with my makeshift spear.

It was a bloody business, the sorriest parody of a bullfight, I guess, that was ever staged anywhere. When I had finally succeeded in dispatching the animal, I made a solemn resolution never again to shoot at a moose until I could be reasonably sure of placing my shots.

The finest moose ranges in Alaska are the west coast of the Kenai, the Rainy Pass district and the Dillinger River basin, on the north slope of the Alaska Range. The latter is still virgin territory and is literally overrun with moose. From the Tonzona River westward to the extreme west fork of the Dillinger it is possible, in late autumn, to see from ten to fifty bulls in a day's hunting. There are moose trails as wide and deep as country roads winding about the spruce-fringed mountain lakes.

If the present world's record trophy is ever topped—which is unlikely, since it is a freak head—I expect that the new record will come out of the Tonzona-Dillinger district. So far as I know there have been but two hunting parties in this region. Marcus Daly, the Montana copper king, hunted here, and two years

later Gunn Buckingham and I went through the district on a pack-horse trip from McKinley Park to the Rainy Pass.

As to transportation, the quickest way is to fly in from Anchorage or Fairbanks and set down on one of the Dillinger lakes. Of course, if you want to make the trip in real wilderness-man fashion, you can go in by pack-train from McKinley Park station on the Alaska railroad. No more delightful cross-country journey could be imagined, for in addition to moose you will have opportunity to take sheep, caribou and bear, with some extraordinarily good fishing and bird hunting—Franklin grouse, willow grouse and ptarmigan—thrown in as an added attraction.

You will, of course, have some difficulty in getting out after your hunt is over. The moose in this part of Alaska do not shed the velvet from their horns until around the tenth of September, and by this time winter is definitely in the offing. Twice I have hazed pack-strings across the 200-odd miles of high tundra between Tonzona and the railroad, with a couple of feet of snow on the ground, the grass gone, and my hunters just about ready to declare all bets off and dig in for the winter.

The Rainy Pass district, while accessible to horses, in my opinion is strictly an airplane proposition. Even if I knew there was an 80-inch head waiting for me at the summit, I'd hesitate to wrangle another string of horses through the tundra bogs and swamps of the Talshulitna and over the wicked shale rims of Happy River. Life is too short, and I like horses too well.

Anyway, the Rainy Pass, to my notion, is much overrated as a hunting country; the game in it does not warrant the expense and trouble of getting there. The Dillinger basin has it faded a dozen ways; so has the Kenai, with respect to moose. One sportsman, to my knowledge, spent ten thousand dollars on a Rainy Pass hunt; and while he took some fine trophies, he could have done as well, if not better, elsewhere for a third of the sum.

The question continually comes up as to whether or not a bull moose will charge a man. Some bulls unquestionably will, especially during the rutting season. At this time they are half blind, thoroughly belligerent, and as unpredictable as mountain weather.

I have seen a great bull, neck swollen as large as a beer barrel, frisking like a colt—kicking up his heels and charging headlong at alder clumps in a spasm of excess energy. And again, at the same time of year, I have seen a bull so dull and stupid that I could have crawled up to him and slapped him on the rump with my hat. Nearly always, unless stampeded by an alert cow, a rutting bull will stand his ground a few moments before taking to the brush, and often will come toward you, shaking his head and gritting his teeth. This possibly sounds odd to sportsmen who have still-hunted moose along the birch-shaded tote roads of Maine and New Brunswick, but it is nevertheless the truth, and has been reported by more competent observers than I.

Hal G. Evarts, the naturalist and writer, while hunting near the head of Tustumena Lake on the Kenai, had an experience with a truculent bull which so impressed him that he later used it in a series of articles on Alaskan big-game hunting. The savagely grunting bull walked out of an alder thicket, head lowered threateningly, neck hair bristling. Evarts, curious to know how close the bull would come, stood his ground, rifle ready in case the animal made a sudden charge.

According to what his guide told me, the bull kept coming until Evarts, convinced he was in for it, threw up his rifle to shoot. At the sudden motion on his part, the bull halted, pawed the ground for a moment like an angry Holstein, and then stalked off, turning at every few paces to grunt and shake his head. Evarts had been skeptical about the fighting tendencies of rutting bull moose. But he went on record then and there as being convinced that under certain circumstances they would attack a human.

While blazing a trap-line trail up the Susitna River one fall, I tried to kill a moose with a .22 rifle. It turned out to be a regrettable error, and I never would have attempted such a thing if I had not been badly in need of fresh meat. The bull was lying asleep in a buck-brush thicket about thirty yards distant.

Easing my packboard to the ground, I pulled a bead on the base of the animal's ear and fired. The bull heaved to his feet

with a startled grunt and came surging out of the brush like a steam-roller. The little bullet hadn't fazed him.

Having no further hope of stopping the animal with the .22, I dropped it and swarmed up a convenient spruce tree which I had been prudent enough to locate before I shot. For the better part of a half hour I roosted on a limb while the enraged bull alternated between trampling my packboard and trying to butt the tree down. Except for the saving presence of that spruce, he probably would have killed me, or at least forced me to swim the Susitna to save my hide.

There is seldom any necessity for calling moose in Alaska, although some guides occasionally do it as a stunt. There are three calls used—the bull call, the cow call and the calf call. The latter seems to be the most effective.

The idea is to imitate the blating moan of a frightened calf, which causes any bull within earshot to believe that another bull is endeavoring to separate a cow from her spring calf. If the call is properly given, he at once comes plowing through the brush to contend for the supposed cow's affections. It is quite dramatic, and makes you feel like a regular Leather-stocking; but if you try it, I suggest that you keep an eye on your backtrail. Buckingham and I, hunting in the Tonzona valley one fall, failed to do this, and as a result got ourselves into what for a moment was a very pretty jack-pot.

It was coming dusk, and the bull was standing in a clump of jack-spruce on the farther shore of a shadowy mountain lake. I had given the calf call a few times, and the bull had twice started to swim across to us, but each time had changed his mind and returned to shore. As a last resort, I scooped up a double handful of water, raised it waist high, and let it trickle back into the lake.

That fetched him. He plunged into the water and started across, swimming high and fast, making a wake like a power boat. Buckingham crouched behind a rock and threw over the safety catch of his .270. There was a ten-foot gravel bank behind us, masked by a fringe of shoulder-high cranberry bushes.

Just as I warned Buckingham in a whisper to hold his fire until

the oncoming bull was well out of the water—I didn't want the task of dressing a moose in the lake—there was a sudden crashing in the brush behind us, followed by a loud snort. I whirled around, and saw another bull towering above us. In the twilight he looked as large as an elephant. A step forward, and he would be over the bank. He was on the warpath, of course, expecting to find another bull, and I wasn't sure that he had discovered his mistake.

Buckingham saved the day. Startled by the sudden looming of the wide-antlered apparition above us, he yelled, "Hi there, you!" and fired from the hip.

The bullet smacked into the gravel bank, showering me with pebbles, and the muzzle blast, within a foot of my head, nearly shattered my eardrums. The bull was as scared as we were, I guess, for he reared up, pivoted on his hind legs, and went tearing out through the cranberry bushes as though all the demons in the north were after him. The other bull, out in the middle of the lake, milled around in circles a moment or two, and then returned to the farther shore—convinced, I suppose, as we were, that it just wasn't his lucky evening.

WORLD-RECORD TIGER SHARKS¹

*Battling and conquering half a ton of buck-
ing, fighting man-eater*

By ZANE GREY

FASCINATING PLACES to fish have been a specialty of mine, and there are many where no other fisherman ever wet a line. This always seemed to be a fetish for me. New and lonely waters! My preference has been the rocky points of islands where two currents meet.

Fishing off Sydney Heads, Australia, is as far removed from this as could be imagined. Great scarred yellow cliffs, like the colored walls of an Arizona cañon, guard the entrance to Sydney Harbor, which, if not really the largest harbor in the world, is certainly the most wonderful. These bold walls, standing high and sheer, perhaps a mile apart, look down upon the most colorful and variable shipping of the seven seas. I passed through this portal on the S.S. *Mariposa*, gazing up at the lofty walls, at the towering lighthouses and the slender wireless stands, black against the sky, never dreaming that the day would come when I saw them above me while fighting one of the greatest giant fish I ever caught.

At the end of three months' fishing on the south coast of Australia, during which my party and I caught sixty-seven big fish, mostly swordfish, we found ourselves at Watson's Bay, just around

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the corner of the South Head, within sight of all Sydney and, in fact, located in the city suburbs, for the purpose of pursuing further our extra ordinary good luck. I hoped, of course, to catch the first swordfish off Sydney Heads, and incidentally beat the shark record.

I was introduced to this Sydney fishing by Mr. Bullen, who held the record, and who had pioneered the rod and reel sport practically alone, and had been put upon his own resources and invention to master the hazardous and hard game of fishing for the man-eating tiger shark.

In angling my admiration and respect go to the man who spends much time and money and endurance in the pursuit of one particular fish. Experiment and persistence are necessary to the making of a great angler. If Mr. Bullen has not arrived, he surely is far on the way. For three years he fished for tiger sharks from boats which in some cases were smaller than the fish he fought. His mistakes in method and his development of tackle were but steps up the stairway to success. I want to record here, in view of the small craft he fished out of and the huge size and malignant nature of tiger sharks, that after a desperate battle to bring one of these man-eaters up to the surface he was justified in shooting it.

This shooting of sharks, by the way, was the method practiced in Australia, as harpooning then was, and still is, prevalent in New Zealand. In America we have sixty years' development behind big-game fishing; and all the sporting clubs disqualify a harpooned or a shot fish. The justification of this rule is that the opportunity is presented many times to kill a big fish or a shark before it has actually waked up. This is not fair to the angler who fights one for a long time.

In Australia, however, the situation is vastly different. There are thousands of sharks. In the book I am writing, *Tales of Man-eating Sharks*, I have data on three hundred tragedies and disasters. I expect this book will be a revelation to those distinguished scientists of the United States who do not believe a shark will attack a human being. Certainly it would be better to fish for

sharks and shoot them on sight than not to fish at all, for every shark killed may save one or more lives.

While I have been in Australia there have been several tragedies, particularly horrible. A boy, bathing at Manly Beach, was taken and carried away in plain sight.

Somewhere in South Australia another boy was swimming near a dock. Suddenly a huge blue-pointer shark seized him and leaped clear of the water with him before making off. Such incidents should make a shark-killer out of any angler.

Before I reached Sydney I had caught a number of man-eaters, notably some whalers, a white death shark and some gray nurse, those sleek treacherous devils believed by many to be Australia's most deadly shark. I had had enough experience to awaken all the primitive savagery to kill that lay hidden in me. The justification, however, inhibits any possible thought of mercy.

Nevertheless, despite all the above, I think gaffing sharks is the most thrilling method and the one that gives the man-eater, terrible as he is, a chance for his life. If you shoot a shark or throw a Norway whale harpoon through him the battle is ended. On the other hand, if by toil and endurance, by pain and skill, you drag a great shark up to the boat, so that your boatman can reach the wire leader and pull him close to try to gaff him, the battle is by no means ended. You may have to repeat this performance time and again; and sometimes your fish gets away after all. Because of that climax I contend that all anglers should graduate to the use of the gaff. Perhaps the very keenest, fiercest thrill is to let your boatman haul in on the leader and you gaff the monster. Thoreau wrote that the most satisfying thing was to strangle and kill a wild beast with one's naked hands.

It was only a short run by boat round the South Head to the line of cliff along which we trolled for bait. The water was deep and blue. Slow swells heaved against the rocks, burst into white spray and flowed back into the sea like waterfalls.

A remarkable feature was the huge flat ledges, or aprons, that jutted out at the base of the walls, over which the swells poured in roaring torrent, to spend their force on the stone face and slide

back in glistening maelstrom. Dr. Stead assures me these aprons are an indication of very recent elevation of the coast. The Gap was pointed out to me, where a ship struck years ago on a black stormy night and went down with all of the hundreds on board, except one man who was lifted to a rock and, crawling up, clung there to be rescued. Suicide Leap was another interesting point, where scores of people had gone to their doom, for reasons no one can ever fathom.

Trolling for bait was so good that I did not have much time for sight-seeing. Bonito and kingfish bit voraciously, and we soon had plenty of bait. We ran out to sea dragging teasers and bonito in the wake of the *Avalon*, and I settled down to that peculiar happiness of watching the sea for signs of fish. Hours just fade away unnoticeably at such a pastime. In the afternoon we ran in to the reefs and drifted for sharks.

I derived a great deal of pleasure from watching the ships pass through the harbor gate and spread in all directions, according to their destinations. Airplanes zoomed overhead. Small craft dotted the green waters outside, and white sails skimmed the inner harbor. Through the wide gate I could see shores and slopes covered with red-roofed houses, and beyond them the skyscrapers of the city. Dominating all was the great Sydney Bridge, with its fretwork span high above the horizon.

It was a grand background for a fishing scene. At once I conceived the idea of photographing a leaping swordfish with Sydney Heads and the gateway to the harbor and that marvelous bridge all lined against the sky behind the leaping fish. Our efforts were futile, however, much to Mr. Bullen's disappointment.

The next day was rough. A hard wind ripped out of the northeast; the sea was ridged blue and white. The boat tipped and rolled and dived until I was weary of hanging on to my seat and the rod. We trolled all over the ocean for hours, until afternoon, and then came in to drift off the heads. Still, somehow, despite all this misery, there was that thing which holds a fisherman to his task. When I climbed up on the dock, I had the blind staggers and the floor came up to meet me.

The third morning dawned warm and still, with a calm ocean and blue sky. Starting early, we trolled for bait along the bluffs as far south as Point Bondi. I had engaged the services of Billy Love, market fisherman and shark catcher of Watson's Bay, to go with us as guide to the shark reefs. We caught no end of bait, and soon were trolling off Bondi. We ran ten miles out, and then turned north and ran on until opposite Manly Beach, where we headed in again to run past that famous bathing beach where so many bathers had been attacked by sharks. On down to Love's shark grounds, directly opposite the harbor entrance between the heads, and scarcely more than a mile outside.

We put down an anchor in about two hundred feet of water. A gentle swell was moving the surface of the sea. The sun felt hot and good. Putting cut bait overboard, we had scarcely settled down to fishing when we had a strike from a small shark. It turned out to be a whaler of about three hundred pounds.

Love was jubilant over its capture.

"Shark meat best for sharks," he avowed enthusiastically. "Now we'll catch a tiger sure!"

That sharks were cannibals was no news to me, but in this instance the fact was more interesting. Emil put a bonito bait over, and Love attached a little red balloon to the line a fathom or two above the leader. This was Mr. Bullen's method, except that he tied the float about 150 feet above the bait, and if a strong current was running he used lead.

For my bait Love tied on a well-cut piece of shark, about two pounds in weight, and added what he called a fillet to hang from the point of the hook. I remarked that this bait looked almost good enough to eat. Then he let my bait down twenty-five fathoms without float or sinker.

This occurred at noon, after which we had lunch. Presently I settled down to fish and absorb my surroundings.

The sun was hot, the gentle motion of the boat lulling, the breeze scarcely perceptible, the sea beautiful and compelling. There was no moment when I could not see craft of all kinds, from great liners to small fishing boats. I sat in my fishing chair,

feet on the gunwale, the line in my hand, and the passage of time was unnoticeable. In fact, time seemed to stand still.

The hours passed. About midafternoon our conversation lagged. Emil went to sleep, and I had to watch his float. Peter smoked innumerable cigarettes, and then he went to sleep. Love's hopes of a strike began perceptibly to fail. He kept repeating, about every hour, that the sharks must be having an off day. But I was quite happy and satisfied.

I watched three albatross hanging around a market boat some distance away. Finally this boat ran in, and the huge white and black birds floated over our way. I told Love to throw some pieces of bait in. He did so, one of which was a whole bonito with its sides sliced off.

The albatross flew toward us, landed on their feet a dozen rods away, and then ran across the water to us. One was shy and distrustful. The others were tame. It happened, however, that the suspicious albatross got the whole bonito, which he proceeded to gulp down, and it stuck in his throat. He drifted away, making a great to-do over the trouble his gluttony had brought him. He beat the water with his wings and ducked his head under, shaking it violently.

Meanwhile the other two came close, to within thirty feet, and they emitted strange, low, not unmusical cries as they picked up the morsels of fish that Love pitched to them. They were huge birds, pure white except across the back and along the wide-spreading wings. Their black eyes had an oriental look, a slanting back and upward, which might have been caused by a little tuft of black feathers.

To say I was in the seventh heaven was putting it mildly. I awoke Emil, who, being a temperamental artist and photographer, went into ecstasies.

"I can't believe my eyes!" he kept exclaiming, and really the sight was hard to believe for Americans who know albatross only through legend and poetry.

Finally the larger and wilder one that had choked over his fish evidently got it down or up, and came swooping down on the

others. Then they engaged in a fight for the pieces that our boatman threw over. They ate a whole bucketful of cut bonito before they had their fill, and one of them was so gorged that he could not rise from the surface. He drifted away, preening himself, while the others spread wide wings and flew out to sea.

Four o'clock found us still waiting for a bite. Emil had given up. Peter averred there were no sharks. Love kept making excuses for the day and, like a true fisherman, saying, "We'll get one tomorrow." But I was not in a hurry. The afternoon was too wonderful to give up. A westering sun shone gold amid dark clouds over the heads. The shipping had increased, if anything, and all that had been intriguing to me seemed magnified. Bowen, trolling in Bullen's boat, hove in sight out on the horizon.

My companions had obviously given up for that day. They were tired of the long wait. It amused me. I remarked to Peter, "Well, old top, do you remember the eighty-three days we fished without getting a bite?"

"I'll never forget that," he replied.

"And on the eighty-fourth day I caught my giant Tahitian marlin?"

"Right, sir," admitted Peter.

Love appeared impressed by the fact, or else what he thought was fiction, but he said nevertheless: "Nothing doing today. We might as well go in."

"Ump-umm," I replied in cowboy parlance. "We'll hang a while longer."

Fifteen minutes later something took hold of my line with a slow, irresistible pull. My heart leaped. I could not accept what my eyes beheld. My line payed slowly off the reel. I put my gloved hand over the moving spool—old habit of being ready to prevent an overrun. Still I did not believe it. But there—the line slipped off slowly, steadily, potently. Strike! There was no doubt of that. And I, who had experienced ten thousand strikes, shook all over with the possibilities of this one. Suddenly sensing the actuality, I called out, "There he goes!"

Peter looked dubiously at my reel—saw the line gliding off. “Right-o, sir!”

Love’s tanned image became radiant. Emil woke up and began to stutter.

“It’s a fine strike,” yelled Love, leaping up. “Starts like a tiger!”

He ran forward to heave up the anchor. Peter directed Emil to follow and help him. Then I heard the crack of the electric started and the sound of the engine.

“Let him have it!” advised Peter hopefully. “It was a long wait, sir. Maybe——”

“Swell strike, Pete,” I replied. “Never had one just like it. He’s taken two hundred yards already. It feels under my fingers just as if you had your hand on my coat sleeve and were drawing me slowly towards you.”

“Take care. He may put it in high. And that anchor line is long.”

When Love and Emil shouted from forward, and then came running aft, the fish, whatever it was, had out between four and five hundred yards of line. I shoved forward the drag on the big reel and struck with all my might. Then I reeled in swift and hard. Not until the fifth repetition of this violent action did I come up on the weight of that fish. So sudden and tremendous was the response that I was lifted clear out of my chair. Emil, hands at my belt, dragged me back.

“He’s hooked. Some fish! Get my harness!” I sang out.

In another moment, with my shoulders sharing that pull, I felt exultant, deeply thrilled, and as strong as Sampson. I quite forgot to look at my watch, which seemed an indication of my feelings. My quarry kept on taking line even before I released the drag.

“Run up on him, Pete. Let’s get close to him. I don’t like being near these anchored boats.”

There were two fishing boats around, the nearer a little too close for comfort. Peter hooked up the engine, and I bent to the task of recovering four hundred yards of line. I found the big

reel perfect for this necessary job. I was hot and sweating, however, when again I came up hard on the heavy weight, now less than several hundred feet away and rather close to the surface. I watched the bend of my rod tip.

"What kind of fish?" I asked.

"It's sure no black marlin," answered Pete reluctantly.

"I couldn't tell from the rod," added Love. "But it's a heavy fish. I hope a tiger——"

Emil sang out something hopeful.

I said, "Well, boys, it's a shark of some kind," and went to work.

With a medium drag I fought that shark for a while, watching the tip and feeling the line. It was true that I had never felt a fish just like this one. One instant he seemed as heavy as a rock; and the next, light, moving, different. Again I lost the feel of him entirely, and knowing the habit of sharks to slip up on the line to bite it, I reeled like mad. Presently I was divided between the sense that he was little, after all, and the sense that he was huge.

Naturally, I gravitated to the conviction that I had hooked a species of fish new to me, and a tremendously heavy one. My plan of battle, therefore, was quickly decided. I shoved up the drag on the great reel to five, six, seven pounds—more drag than I had ever used, but this fish pulled out line just as easily as if there had been none. I could not hold him or get in any line without following him. So I cautiously pushed up the drag to nine pounds—an unprecedented power for me to use. It made no difference at all to the fish, wherefore I went back to five pounds. For a while I ran after him, wound in the line, then had the boat stopped and let him pull out the line again.

"I forgot to take the time. Did any of you?"

"About half an hour," replied Emil.

"Just forty minutes," said Peter, consulting his clock in the cabin. "And you're working too fast—too hard. Ease up."

I echoed that forty minutes and could hardly believe it. But time flies in the early stages of a fight with a big fish. I took Peter's advice and reduced my action. And at this stage of the game I

reverted to the conduct and talk of my companions, and to the thrilling facts of the setting. Peter had the wheel and watched my line, grim and concerned. Love bounced around my chair, eager, talkative, excited. Emil sang songs and quoted poetry while he waited with his camera.

The sea was aflame with sunset gold. A grand golden flare flooded through the gate between the heads. Black against this wonderful sky, the Sydney Bridge curved aloft over the city, majestic, marvelous in its beauty. To its left the sinking sun blazed upon the skyscraper buildings. The black cliffs, gold-rimmed, stood up boldly far above me. But more marvelous than any of these—in fact, exceedingly rare and lovely to me—were the ships putting to sea out of that illuminated gateway. There were six of these in plain sight.

“Getting out before Good Friday,” said Peter. “That one on the right is the *Monowai*, and the other on the left is the *Maunganui*. They’re going to come to either side of us, and pretty close.”

“Well!” I exclaimed. “What do you think of that? I’ve been on the *Monowai*, and have had half a dozen trips in the *Maunganui*.”

These ships bore down on us, getting up speed. The officers on the bridge of the *Maunganui* watched us through their glasses, and both waved their caps. They must have recognized the *Avalon*, and therefore knew it was I who was fast to a great fish—right outside the entrance of Sydney Harbor. The deck appeared crowded with curious passengers who waved and cheered. That ship steamed by us, hissing and roaring, not a hundred yards away, and certainly closer to my fish than we were. The *Monowai* passed on the other side, almost even with her sister ship.

Close behind these loomed a ship twice as large. She appeared huge in comparison. From her black bulk gleamed myriads of lights, and vast clouds of smoke belched from her stacks. Peter named her the *Rangitati*, or some name like that, and said she was bound for England, via the Suez Canal. Then the other

ships came on and passed us, and soon were silhouetted dark against the purple sky.

All this while, which seemed very short, and was perhaps half an hour, I worked on my fish, and I was assured that he knew it. Time had passed, for the lighthouse on the cliff suddenly sent out its revolving piercing rays. Night was not far away, yet I seemed to see everything almost as clearly as by day.

For quite a while I had been able to get the double line over the reel, but I could not hold it. However, I always tried to. I had two pairs of gloves and thumb stalls on each hand, and with these I could safely put a tremendous strain on the line without undue risk, which would have been the case had I trusted the rod.

By now the sport and thrill had been superseded by pangs of toil and a grim reality of battle. It had long ceased to be fun. I was getting whipped, and I knew it. I had worked too swiftly. The fish was slowing, and it was a question of who would give up first. Finally, without increasing the strain, I found I could stop and hold my fish on the double line. This was occasion for renewed zest. When I told my crew, they yelled wildly. Peter had long since got out the big detachable gaff with its long rope.

I held on to that double line with burning, painful hands. And I pulled it in foot by foot, letting go to wind in the slack.

"The leader—I see it!" whispered Love.

"Whoopee!" yelled Emil.

"A little more, sir," added Peter tensely, leaning over the gunwale, his gloved hands outstretched.

In another moment I had the big swivel of the leader in reach.

"Hang on—Pete." I panted as I stood up to release the drag and unhook my harness. "Drop the leader—overboard. Emil, stand by. Love, gaff this fish when I—tell you!"

"He's coming, sir," rasped out Peter, hauling in, his body taut. "There! My Gawd!"

Emil screeched at the top of his lungs.

The water opened to show the back of an enormous shark. Pearl-gray in color, with dark tiger stripes, a huge rounded head

and wide flat back, this fish looked incredibly beautiful. I had expected a hideous beast.

"Now!" I yelled.

Love lunged with the gaff. I stepped back, suddenly deluged with flying water and blindly aware of a roar and a banging on the boat. I could not see anything for moments. The men were shouting hoarsely in unison. I distinguished Peter's voice. "Rope—tail!"

"Let him run!" I shouted.

Between the up-splashing sheets of water I saw the three men holding that shark. It was a spectacle. Peter stood up, but bent, with his brawny shoulders sagging. Love and Emil were trying to rope that flying tail. For I had no idea how long, but probably a brief time, this strenuous action took place before my eyes. It beat any battle I recalled with a fish at the gaff.

The huge tiger rolled over, all white underneath, and he opened a mouth that would have taken a barrel. I saw the rows of white fangs and heard such a snapping of jaws as never before had struck my ears. I shuddered at their significance. No wonder men shot and harpooned such vicious brutes!

"It's over—his tail!" cried Love hoarsely, straightening up with the rope.

Emil lent a hand. And then the three men held that ferocious tiger shark until he ceased his struggles. They put another rope over his tail and made fast to the ring-bolt.

When Peter turned to me, his broad breast heaved, his breath whistled, the corded muscles stood out on his arms—he could not speak.

"Pete! Good work! I guess that's about the hardest tussle we've ever had at the gaff."

We towed our prize into the harbor and around to the dock at Watson's Bay, where a large crowd awaited us. They dragged the vast bulk of my shark upon the sand. It required twenty-odd men to move him. He looked marble color in the twilight. But the tiger stripes showed up distinctly. He knocked men right and left with his lashing tail, and he snapped with those terrible jaws.

The crowd, however, gave that business end of him a wide berth. I had one good long look at this tiger shark while the men were erecting the tripod, and I accorded him more appalling beauty and horrible significance than all the great fish I had ever caught.

"Well, Mr. Man-eater, you will never kill any boy or girl!" I flung at him.

That was the deep and powerful emotion I felt—the justification of my act—the worthiness of it, and the pride in what it took. There, I am sure, will be the explanation of my passion and primal exultance. Dr. Stead, scientist and official of the Sydney Museum, and Mr. Bullen of the Rod Fishers Society weighed and measured my record tiger shark. Length, 13 feet 10 inches. Weight, 1,036 pounds!

Author's Footnote: I went to Australia at the urgent persuasion of Government officials and sportsmen to try out the known and unknown big-game fishing waters.

I left on December 11, 1935, and returned on September 5, 1936. My boat, the *Avalon*, was shipped from New Zealand to Australia. I found Australia fishing beyond all expectations, and we caught seventy big fish, weighing 21,000 pounds, including four records. There are 13,000 miles of unknown fishing waters, which I will undertake to explore in 1937. Z.G.

GEESE! GET DOWN!¹

Sweeter words are not spoken in goose pits

By GORDON MACQUARRIE

FROSTY MORNINGS on the Rock County prairie of Wisconsin the wild geese fly to the cornfields from Geneva, Koshkonong and Delavan Lakes, and there are autumn ground fogs, so that those who crouch in goose pits may study the phantom billows and marvel at such morning magic. The endless squadrons begin coming to the stripped fields a little after daylight. Deliberate and majestic, like long, crawling strings in the distance, they float over the shrouded prairie and fill the sky with wild, haunting music.

So it was yesterday morning. Or did it just seem like yesterday morning? We shall not quibble. Time is of no importance where the gray honkers are concerned.

In the south, over the farm lands, ragged flocks of mallards traded back and forth. Straight north were wisps of clouds. They were lazy, streamlined clouds blown smooth by the night wind. If these things were not enough to occupy the watchers in the pits, there was the fat red sun in the east, rising lazily over low mists to flood the plain with that recurring miracle which we call daylight.

Piercing the fog at this witching hour were the tall silos of Wisconsin's richest farming country. Over there where the honk-

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ers were making wild music, a barn loomed. Yonder in a gentle dip, smoke rose from a chimney and a farmhouse rode at anchor in the fog. Just to the right of it was the church steeple—it was a steeple until the morning wind rolled away the fog to reveal a windmill tower.

As all men know, this is a fine place for hunting, or for just watching the sun come up. Farmers are lucky people to be abroad on that lovely plain in the early morning.

Near a field of tardy winter rye, Earl May of Milwaukee had spread his big cork goose decoys, cunning replicas, fashioned in the winter nights when a man's thoughts keep turning to last year and the year to come. With Earl in the pit was this reporter. Earl, who is a moose of a man, but shoots a 16-gauge withal, paid tribute to the day's beginning, and sized up the situation:

"Those from the right are Geneva and Delavan honkers. The ones from the left are Koshkonong boarders. How many would you say are in the air now?"

"Do you mean in sight?"

"Right. Within sight of us this minute."

"Two thousand—and that's a wild guess."

"I'll say three, and I don't care if we never fire a shot."

He leaned on the edge of the pit, dug almost five feet down in the heavy, rich soil of this famous prairie, and studied the tracteries in the sky as the geese trailed from water to favored cornfields.

"I'm leaving in four days to hunt deer. Going into the cut-over back of Phillips. This is my vacation time. I'll get a deer—still-hunting, too. When winter comes, I'll be ready for the tedious months. We're lucky people, we Wisconsin hunters. Ducks, birds, geese and deer.

"No, sir, I don't care if I don't pull a trigger this morning. This gives me the same kick as seeing the first snow hit the hemlocks in deer season. I wouldn't be a bit surprised if there is not much doing today, either. There's hardly any wind, and smoke is going almost straight up."

The day before, Earl had dug that pit. He, with Ed and Frank Larkin, hunting farmer brothers, had dug it on a gentle, round-

topped ridge in a 40-acre field. Aside from the bulging ridge where the blind was sunk, the field was almost as flat as a floor.

The brothers Larkin and Earl had brought the big farm truck in there and shoveled the dirt directly into it, so as to leave no tell-tale crumbs of soil sprinkled on the ground. They had been very careful not to trample down the earth and vegetation, and when the pit was dug they built a lid for it, cunningly, of light boards with stubble woven through its frame.

Ten feet away, it took discerning eyes to spot the difference between that pit cover and the field around it. To such extremes must one go to lure the canny Canada close to the decoys. They go further, do these painstaking hunters in Wisconsin's best goose country. They keep a short-handled rake in the pit blind and rake up the down-trodden grasses where they have been pressed down by boots. And woe betide the careless one who is so foolish as to toss an empty shell on to the ground outside the pit!

"That," says the veteran Earl May, "is almost as bad as a mirror on a field. A honker will see it at a distance, and the whole flock will turn. Several years ago I had a perfect pit on this prairie. My decoys are pretty good imitations, if I do say so. They were so good that some boys working a pit a mile away got jealous as they saw the geese avoid their setup and come to mine. Those boys certainly queered my game until I got wise.

"Most of the geese coming to my decoys at this place had to fly over a little ridge of stubble in otherwise open, plowed prairie. All of a sudden the geese began avoiding me. They'd come sliding in with their wings set, but when they got near that ridge they'd climb out of there like someone had shot at them.

"Time after time they did it. I knew my blind was perfect. I suspected something in that stubble was frightening them, and kicked around in it. Finally I found—you've guessed it—a small hand mirror, lying face up, placed to flash a warning to those incoming geese. I took that mirror out of the field to a good big rock and cracked it in a million pieces with another rock.

"Don't let anyone tell you that breaking mirrors will bring bad luck. I had the best of luck after that!"

Black ducks, they say, are postgraduates of the school of experience. Some old baymen here in Wisconsin will swear a black duck has a sense of smell! More cautious heads will reply that it all depends on what kind of soft coal a bayman is burning in his pipe, and also how recently said bayman has been subjected to a thorough dry-cleaning.

At any rate, black ducks are credited in these parts with being smarter than their near kin, the gray mallards; but in all truth, where the black duck's wisdom leaves off, that of the Canada begins.

"If we can't get any honkers to work the decoys," said Earl as the minutes passed, "we can spread some duck decoys in the cornfields. We might catch a greenhead or two in range."

But there was no hurry. It was pleasant to lean elbows on the edge of the pit and study the last of the morning goose flight, even though the birds were landing in cornfields miles away. There is a fascination in just watching geese. The year (1940) was the first in many that had brought Wisconsin some real goose shooting. Early November closings of previous years had found the Canadas just arriving on the prairies in the southern counties, so that 1940's fifteen-day extension was a joy to goose hunters, many of whom had not even dug a goose pit for several years.

With the extended season the southern tier of counties, particularly Rock and Walworth, saw long-forgotten decoys, solid and silhouette, come out of attics and barn lofts. Goose hunters looked again to their hardest shooting guns, and in the snug little farm trading centers round about storekeepers told of No. 2's and BB's being once more in demand.

In all the years of the shorter seasons the flame had burned but dimly. And there had been many protests from farmers and sportsmen: "Please, just a few days' extension of the season on geese alone," for this is one of the few areas in Wisconsin where geese are a sort of autumn religion with the faithful. Old-timers like the Larkin brothers tell of lying in the snow on the ground with white sheets over them and the temperature around zero. They tell of the live-decoy days. There are domesticated Canada

honkers on these prairie farms today that are known to be more than twenty-five years old.

The Larkin boys had one gander that they prized especially. It seems this bird got to be a member of the family, and Frank swears he housebroke him, like a dog. He stalked about the farmyard with a lordly air, allegedly afraid of nothing that flew or walked, including dogs, pigs, men and geese. 'Tis said many an unhappy neighbor's dog, unacquainted with this goose's overlordship, was put to yelping flight as the old gentleman's pinions caught up with him.

"I'll bet that gander could have broken your leg with his wings if he had caught you right," Frank Larkin recalls.

In the hunting seasons of those old days the patriarch really came into his own. Frank says the old boy was as disappointed as any hunting dog at being left behind. Wild birds lighting out of range of the pit were handled beautifully by the old chap. He was never tethered, for he would not attempt to escape. He would amble slowly over to the shy strangers, lick the biggest gander in the flock and bring the whole band back with him—in range!

Several years ago he was shot by a skulking pot hunter. Ed Larkin heard the shot and saw the trespasser making off across the flat fields. The man had the brass to slay the goose in its own yard.

On the prairie you can see a man for miles. Ed Larkin knew the country and he knew the roads. He went into the house and put on a pair of skin-tight gloves, good for holding the knuckles together in a scrap. Then he stepped into the farm truck, drove discreetly down this road and that road, and finally headed off the thief.

Neighbors recall the event as a satisfactory settlement of all issues involved. And the old goose? What of him?

The Larkin boys gave him decent burial. Eat that old friend? I should say not! You don't know the Larkin boys!

Talk rambled on as the sun rose, the fog thinned and the Larkin boys started the new combine to rattling in a distant field of soybeans. Earl watched half the horizon and I the other half.

The sun grew warmer. The wind picked up. It was to be a warm day for late November in Wisconsin.

Abruptly I sensed Earl's languor change to frozen intensity. Often this sudden change in a companion of the blind is sensed before it is seen. You may be sitting there back to back, not touching, and it happens. A halt in the middle of a sentence, the quick stamping on a cigarette, a sharp intake of breath—this is the unspoken language of the blind.

The transition came in seconds' time. I followed Earl's eyes and saw the moving thread in the sky that was taking a different route than the other moving threads had taken.

"Down! Down! We're going to get shooting!"

Sweeter words are not spoken in goose pits. We carefully pulled the light pit cover over our heads and watched the oncoming birds, first by tilting the cover a little, and then, as the birds neared, by staring straight up through the minute holes in the lid.

The geese were honking like mad. Earl's cork decoys were doing the trick. Let no man declare that well-made cork decoys will not draw Canadas. The flock came over us about a hundred yards high, made a wide swing in back of us and then set their wings and zoomed straight over our heads at the decoys. There is no other spectacle in all wildfowling like this!

But at the moment we had little time to think of the miracle of flight which hung over us. A man who hunts is often thus a victim of mixed emotions. There is the breath-catching sight of great birds and there is his hunter's heart skipping beats. Earl May is a veteran of the goose pits, but that morning he trembled as with the ague. Later I mentioned it and he retorted: "How about yourself? I heard your teeth clicking above the clatter of Ed Larkin's combine!"

It is indeed a shame that so few sportsmen go to the pains of preparing for geese. It does take work. Pit blinds carefully made. Faultless decoys. Far-shooting guns. And long, cold waits. But it is worth it to see those tremendous birds, wings stiffened, black legs straight out, come sailing overhead.

At such a time the very air seems to become a heavier medium

than the air that ducks zip through. How could it be otherwise and support such heavy-bodied flyers? Coming in like that, especially after the hunter has worked on ducks, they give one the sensation of entertaining the winged hosts of another planet.

The approach of wild geese to a blind is one of the neatest optical illusions in nature. The geese just keep on coming. You think they are one hundred yards away, and they are two hundred. You think they are fifty yards away, and they are one hundred. There is an illusion in such flight that upsets the calculations of even the veterans, and especially will it upset the hunter keyed to ducks. I have seen this illusion carried out even in motion pictures in which wild geese seem to fly straight into the camera lens interminably, getting bigger and bigger.

The geese, about fifteen of them, were over the decoys, hanging there, it seemed. I saw Earl's right hand dart upward like a snake and fling aside the lid of the blind. He grunted something which must have been intended for "Now!" but he sounded more like "A-a-ark!" pronounced through clenched teeth. I saw his little 16-gauge flash to his big shoulder and felt sorry for him with that pea-shooter. But he likes the gun and picks his bird.

Three times the 16-gauge barked, at the same bird, which tumbled. And then Earl was yelling: "Shoot! For God's sake, man, shoot!"

Fortunately, as he yelled, he also removed his right foot from where it pinned down my left foot in the crowded blind, and then I had room to stand and operate the double-barrel 12-gauge.

At the open barrel feathers flew. The goose was getting 'way out when the tight barrel caught him. Earl May swears that goose was one hundred yards away by then, that it was just a stray No.2 buck that clipped its right pinion, that the fall of thirty yards to the frozen prairie was what really killed it. Suffice it that at this moment the Larkin boys shut off the combine in the soy-bean field a half mile away, and Ed said later he heard the bird hit the prairie.

Pure luck! Two geese, when we might have had two apiece

with heavier armament and a little more care in arranging ourselves in a cramped blind. But two corn-fed geese can be quite a load to haul in from the prairie, and they can take up a lot of room in a pit blind, too. Both were Canadas, mine about 8 pounds, Earl's close to 12.

Genial Ed Larkin came down to the blind shortly after to declare he never saw such awful shooting. That morning this farmer-sportsman released a dozen cock pheasants of his own raising, so that they might go forth and replenish their kind in the neighborhood. While he was completing this job, not far from our blind, Earl May caught sight of a new convoy of Canadas working toward us. Ed sought the nearest cover, which was in the pit. He got in the bottom of it, and I tell you we literally stood on his back in the crowded blind.

There was Ed Larkin, scrunched down between us, cussing Earl for having such big feet, and there were eight sociable honkers making that long, stiff-winged toboggan slide into our decoys. I recall that as Earl let go with his 16-gauge Ed yelled, "Give it to 'em but get off my hand!" And I remember that once again I got my elbows over the rim of the pit, and by that time Earl had one down and running and I said to myself, "Here's where I make a double!"

But again the open barrel merely dusted feathers, and it took the close barrel to knock him down. I vowed by all that was holy to level nothing but a 10-gauge or a super 12 at them next year.

They can be hit. They are not such elusive targets by any means. But the thing is to hit them hard and make them stay hit.

Never shall I forget Earl legging it over the frozen prairie after that runner. The bird took him a half mile, through fences, across a creek, over plowed fields. When he returned, red-faced and perspiring, with 10 pounds of Canada draped over his shoulder, I struck while the iron was hot: "That 16 is all right for ducks, but not for these birds. I'm none too confident with the 12."

"I love that gun like a brother, and I'll probably never change, but I believe you're right," he replied.

It was nearly noon. The November sun was showing how kindly it could be even four days before the deer season. Ed Larkin returned to the combine in the soybean field. Earl and I stood in the blind and talked. It is a great part of hunting, this talk. Nothing was moving except ducks, and we were in no mood to stage an anticlimax duck hunt. So we stayed out the shooting hours in the pit, reaching down now and then to stroke the fat breasts of four great black-legged Canadas.

"I'll be dog-goned if I know what a man would do with more than a couple of 'em," Earl remarked.

I left Earl in the Larkin yard that night, with the combine closing in swiftly on the small square patch of remaining soybeans. Earl would hunt a few more days there, then haul out for the deer woods, 350 miles north. The next morning he would be out there with Ed, and they would see the eddying morning fog and the windmill that looked like a church steeple and the great gray geese trading over the plain to the feeding places.

"I hope you get a buck," I said, leaving.

"I don't deserve one after this," he answered.

I drove home. Not swiftly, for I was already two hours late and the supper I had said I would be on hand for was long over when finally I arrived, cold and hungry. I put the car away. I hung hunting clothes on the proper hook. I put the 12-gauge in its corner.

The lady who tolerates me said: "Huh! You should have gone duck hunting. Now we'll have to buy a Thanksgiving turkey." Then she added, exercising the right of all women to scan the time card: "We had a swell supper, but all I can give you is left-overs. After all, you're two hours late. . . ."

She was sitting in a chair in the living room, bent over some mysterious chore with a needle which we goose hunters never quite come to understand. I retrieved the two Canadas from the vestibule by the kitchen door and, while she sat there with her back to me, tossed them over her head to her feet. *Thump!*

Let it be reported that she dropped the needlework in the

chair. I know, for later I sat on it and felt the needle. But that was long after I had cleaned up on the finest late-evening emergency supper that any goose hunter ever had—and no leftovers either, gentlemen.

WALRUSING¹

Hunting and exploring through polar ice

By HAROLD McCRACKEN

THE ARCTIC ICE is one of the most wonderful things on this old earth of ours—to keep away from. The *Schooner Morrissey*, in command of Captain Robert A. (Bob) Bartlett, of North Pole fame, journeyed more than 10,000 miles under charter to take us into this same arctic ice. The vessel had been sent from New York City by way of the Panama Canal.

The trip was officially known as the Stoll-McCracken Siberian Arctic Expedition of the American Museum of Natural History. Our main object in those parts was to procure material for a group of walrus for the new Hall of Ocean Life in that great institution.

The personnel of the expedition journeyed across the continent to join the vessel at Prince Rupert, British Columbia. Mr. and Mrs. Charles H. Stoll went aboard at Port Moller, Alaska. The museum was represented by four members of its scientific staff: H. E. Anthony, Curator of Mammals; Edward Weyer, archeologist; F. L. Jaques, artist and ornithologist; Andrew Johnston, preparator. Junius Bird of Columbia University was botanist and assistant engineer, and Edward Manley was in charge of the wireless equipment, with which we kept in daily touch with the outside world.

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We journeyed into the interior of the Alaska Peninsula in quest of big brown bears, and dug into ancient arctic village sites in quest of artifacts and information having a bearing on the earliest of American aboriginal settlers, and discovered some unusual mummified human beings of prehistoric inhabitants of the Aleutian Islands. Now we faced the vast and foreboding arctic ice in our quest for walruses.

A sportsman is not entirely responsible for where he goes or the risks to which he subjects himself when some unusual game animal is involved in the plot. It makes but little or no difference if a section is reeking with disease, fraught with dangers, or subjected to intense heat or frigid cold—so long as the place is inhabited by the object of a sportsman's quest. There is no more inhospitable place than the Top of the World, for which we were headed. Walruses and polar bears show very poor judgment in making their homes up there; likewise, any sportsman probably shows as poor judgment in going up there to get them. Certainly there are far more attractive parts of the world in which even a walrus might live.

There is a picturesqueness and a fascination, however, in zig-zagging among the ever-shifting icy islands. You know that it is dangerous business. If your vessel becomes caught in the frozen clutches of the ice, it may mean "bad news" for all on board. This sort of thing makes a sportsman's life so interesting.

The *Schooner Morrissey* was specially equipped for traveling in the polar ice. Her hull was sheathed with "ironbark"; a heating plant had been installed, and we had enough coal to combat the temperature of 60 to 80 degrees below. However, we had neither desire nor intention to spend a winter in the walruses' back yard.

On the morning of July 30th, we passed through Bering Strait, the gateway to the arctic, and pointed the *Morrissey's* long bowsprit toward Wrangel Island. We were two or three weeks later than we had originally planned. A broken propeller shaft caused the delay.

A large school of whales sported ahead of the boat, rolling their

monster black backs out of the water, spouting geysers of white spray high in the air, and lifting their big, sail-like flukes clear of the water as they sounded. A haze, like a veil of mystery, hung over the rugged Siberian coast off our port quarter. Ahead, we knew not how far, lay the polar ice. Somewhere, lying languidly on its blue-white floes, were the prehistoric-appearing walruses which were the object of our visit. Some of these were destined to be preserved permanently in a natural group in the Hall of Ocean Life at the American Museum of Natural History, New York.

For four days we sailed. Then, white and foreboding, the ice floes reached out their frozen finger tips to receive us. But the *Morrissey* did not hesitate. Boldly she cleaved her way through the icy entanglement that stretched endlessly to blend into the hazy horizon up toward the pole.

From the crow's-nest at the top of the schooner's towering mast, I gazed with awe and fascination out over the spectacle. As the boat worked its way into the ice the calls of "Port!" and "Star-board!" were bellowed down to the man at the wheel. Now and then the sharp bow would strike a berg that would make the whole vessel tremble and cause one unconsciously to glance about to make sure that the hull was still intact. This alarm was entirely unnecessary, because Captain Bob Bartlett knew just how large a cake of ice his schooner could strike without danger.

We had seen a couple of stray walruses the day before we reached the ice. No attempt was made to get them, as a walrus in the water is quite an unsatisfactory animal to stalk. From the time that the first ice pan was sighted, everybody was on a sharp lookout. Every pair of binoculars on the boat was put into use. Every suspicious-appearing dark spot on a pan of ice was given a careful inspection.

Just before noon of the first day in the ice, the *Morrissey* was tied up to a big old "growler," or very large berg, for the purpose of taking on water. The pools which are found in the depressions on these, formed from the melting snow and rain, are as fresh and sweet as water from any mountain spring.

The following morning we wound our way toward Herald Island, which is about thirty-five miles eastward from Wrangel. The weather was clear, and the barren, rocky cliffs of the island stood out boldly against their icy setting. Conditions around Herald Island did not look good; the ice floes were continually jamming together. We were unable to get closer than about four miles; so Captain Bartlett turned the vessel toward the southeast.

Day after day we maneuvered and bumped our way through the jaws of the ice pack. Sometimes we encountered snow-storms. At other times a dense fog settled around us, and we were compelled to tie up to a big "growler" to keep from wandering into a "jackpot" from which there would be no escape. Every day was freezing cold. Fur parkas, fur mitts and boots, and the heaviest "undies" we had were the vogue. On the same day that the temperature was 97 degrees in New York City, our thermometer registered 26 degrees.

For the most part, in the two thousand miles which we traveled north of the arctic circle, we kept fairly close to the edge of the ice pack. It is along the edge that one is most apt to find walrus. Conditions were unusually bad in 1928. The prevailing winds had been from the northwest. This resulted in scattering the ice out in the open sea. Instead of a comparatively even edge for us to follow in our search for game, we had to zigzag back and forth through from two to ten or more miles of scattered ice. This was not so good.

On our new course we went to a point approximately 225 miles northwest of Point Barrow. This was well up into the "black" or unexplored area. We saw a few scattered individual walrus and gave chase to a couple. We abandoned attempting anything but a herd. And no herd was found. We decided to return at once to the vicinity of Wrangel and Herald Islands.

One clear, crisp morning on our return course, the thrilling cry was bellowed from the crow's-nest: "Walrus! Walrus!"

All hands rushed toward the bow, alert to catch a glimpse of the elusive quarry. A great brown head rose out of the cold blue

water ahead of the boat. A pair of big white tusks gleamed as a snorting creature rolled over and disappeared.

"Full speed ahead!"

The race was on. Again the big head rose, and again the great white tusks flashed enticingly as it rolled over. Jagged points of big bergs raked and ground against the ship's sides and made it tremble with the impact. Across tranquil openings we plowed toward seemingly impassable abutments of ice.

Then we came to a long, unbroken line of ice through which it was impossible for the *Morrissey* to follow. A feeling of disappointment settled upon us as the order to turn the ship around was bellowed out. The man on duty twirled the wheel hard over. As the boat swung we were startled by another sudden cry of "Walrus! Plenty walrus!"

What a sight greeted us now! Less than a hundred yards away was a large pan of ice literally jammed with the monster creatures which we had been seeking so diligently. And we had run right on to them.

"Hard a-port!" came the brusque order, quietly.

The *Morrissey* swung to starboard and moved off to a safe distance. As we moved we sighted another and slightly smaller bunch of walrus on another ice pan farther on. It looked as though this was the day for which we had been waiting.

By the time our ship had reached a place where it would not disturb the creatures, we had guns, harpoons, cameras and the two power launches in readiness. The small boats were lowered, their engines started, and back we went. Mr. and Mrs. Stoll were to do the shooting. I was content, for this episode at least, to shoot with my camera.

As we began to get closer the motors were throttled down so as to make the least possible noise. Two hundred yards—now their gleaming white tusks and grotesque shapes could be distinguished. One hundred yards—still they had not noticed us. Fifty yards—and we began to get restless and eye each other questioningly.

Like creatures of a prehistoric age, they loomed in front of us—tons of fatty bodies strangely wrinkled, gleaming ivory tusks pro-

truding at all angles. All huddled together like so many gigantic puppies. The most of them motionless—asleep. Others moved their monstrous heads lazily. They were many hundreds of miles from the nearest habitation of even an Eskimo hunter—as far into the oblivion of untraveled ways as a star in the firmament.

Here and there among them, we now noticed, lay their young—ridiculous miniature replicas of their parents. This was unusual luck for us, as females with young are the most difficult to find, and were the most necessary part of the museum group for which we had made this long voyage.

One hundred feet! The engine was stopped. Fifty feet! We were going right up on to them. My heart beat fast. Mr. and Mrs. Stoll raised their rifles for action.

"Pick your animals," I whispered almost breathlessly as I continued to crank off a motion picture record of the unusual scene.

Then suddenly an ugly head, with rapier-like tusks, rose high above the huddled mass. Two tiny eyes glared at us questioningly for a moment. The boat swung quietly broadside. Then came the sudden crash of a heavy rifle.

Instantly the whole herd became a squirming mass. The cold air rang with their deep-toned bellowings of alarm and defiance. One after another they dropped over the edge into the water, each bulky beast throwing a wake that rocked our boat. Great dark bodies slipped like shadows of sharks in the blue depths beneath us. Two remained motionless on the ice.

Then up they began to come in a bunch. Every one was faced toward us, their glistening ivory tusks, tiny eyes and grotesque bewhiskered faces giving them a most uncanny appearance. They were bellowing lustily and snorting fine sprays of water into the air almost like whales. What a sight it was! One of the most thrilling I have ever seen.

Our boat was headed straight for the churning maelstrom, and in a few moments we were right in their midst. Heads the size of barrels, wrinkled and barnacled, with tusks the size of baseball bats, reared up alongside the boat, and the spray from their throats and nostrils actually wet us.

Mothers and young had become separated, and the old ones defiantly stood their ground. Two of them made lunges at our boat, their heavy tusks striking the sides with an impact that seemed heavy enough to splinter the planks. One of these came up in the very churn of our propeller with the apparent intention of making a second attack from the rear. I stopped my picture-taking long enough to grab my rifle and put a bullet in its throat—not more than eight feet from the end of my gun. The boat swerved about, and the Eskimo in the bow sank a harpoon in the creature's back before it settled out of sight.

Mr. and Mrs. Stoll had each picked fine specimens of full-grown animals. We now picked three young ones for the group, and decided we had enough. Then the *Morrissey* was signaled to come in, and we started collecting the harpoon line floats and towing the submerged animals toward a floe where they could be hoisted aboard the schooner.

They were taken aboard *in toto*, and how they filled the schooner's deck! Nor was it an easy matter to take care of them. Block and tackle and engine power were required to move even the skins after they were removed. Complete measurements were made. Even the skeletons of most of the animals were preserved. No care or pains were spared in these initial stages which were to lead to their ultimate preservation in a life-like group in the American Museum of Natural History.

Now we had the bulls to locate. Once again the patient vigil was begun from deck and crow's-nest. The *Morrissey* zigzagged back to the southern point of the ice, cut across it, and once again headed northwest toward Wrangel and Herald Islands. A few scattered walruses were sighted, but no other herds. None were gotten. Day after day we watched for the granddaddies of the ice floes. The heavy northwest winds had pushed the whole arctic pack to the southward.

We found that it was now impossible to get closer than about twenty-five miles off Herald Island. So we swung west to try to get to Wrangel, but shortly ran into the "western ice," which seemed to extend due south toward the Siberian coast.

"Things look pretty bad," advised Captain Bartlett. "It's a bad year. The big stuff is way down. We'd better get farther south. For if the western ice and the eastern ice come together down below us, we're here for the winter."

If there is any living person who knows ice conditions, it is Captain Bartlett. We started south!

As we followed the western ice southward it kept bearing more and more to the east. This indicated that there was a lot of it below us. We ran into some veritable gales of wind. Sometimes it seemed that the terrific blasts would blow the masts right out of the *Morrissey's* deck. It was cold, and the spray sometimes froze to every rope and stick of wood, though this was in the latter part of August.

Bering Strait was found to be jammed full of ice, and for a while it looked as though we were not going to be able to get out of the arctic. The gateway was closed. Nor did we have the big bulls for the group. Then at last, when we were just north of the Strait off the Siberian coast, and about ready to give up, it happened.

"Walrus! Walrus! Big ones!" exclaimed one of the Eskimo hunters excitedly as he hurried along the deck from his lookout post on the bow.

Two huge bodies were soon located with our binoculars. They were a long way back in the big ice. Their big bodies, dried to an almost pink color by the sun, gave assurance of their desirability, even from that distance.

The whale-boat was swung over the ship's side and lowered into the water. Our paraphernalia was put aboard, and we were soon winding our way back toward them. The ice was big, and they were often completely hidden from view for what seemed long periods. Then, as we passed openings, their big, bulky bodies gave us assurance that they had not taken to the water and disappeared. The closer we got, the more certain we became that they were big enough even for our group.

Due to the lay of the icebergs, it was necessary for us to go through a long, narrow lane that would bring us right out upon

them. They were almost completely hidden from our view most of the time, until we were not more than fifty feet away.

Those were tense moments. No one spoke. I was at the movie camera. It was decided that Mr. Stoll should take one, and Mrs. Stoll the other. All but myself were crouched down in the boat. Occasionally I could get a momentary peek at the tops of the great creatures over the jagged ice and would direct the boat.

Never will I forget the sight that awaited us when our launch slipped out around the last point of ice and we were right on them. They were monstrous.

One big bull raised its ponderous body and turned a great, bulging neck around to stare at us. A glance at that mighty head and big, long ivory tusks was recommendation enough.

Charlie Stoll's gun spoke. In our nervous tension, the crash was like a great explosion. The big beast's whole body jerked, and its head dropped to the ice. The other animal reared up. No sooner had the second head and neck come into view than Mrs. Stoll's gun barked. Each fired another shot. By this time we were right upon them; they were not more than fifteen feet from the bow of our launch. It was all over!

Then the *Morrissey* came pushing her way in through the bergs to pick them up. It was a wonderful sight to see the sharp, graceful prow of the schooner slowly cleave its way through the heavy ice and stop at last right alongside the pan on which our prizes lay.

They were big fellows. They measured approximately twelve feet long, and their weight was estimated at about a ton and a half apiece. The tusks of one were thirty-one inches long. Our group was at last complete.

Later the same day, we saw in the neighborhood of three hundred walrus. It seemed that all the walrus in the arctic had congregated here to string out in bunches of from half a dozen to sixty or seventy along a small stretch of ice—and not more than fifty miles from where we had entered the arctic. But our last two completed the museum group, and we were very well satisfied.

As far as the actual hunting of walrus is concerned, it is

very much lacking in the spectacular thrill that comes with many other varieties of game. Our encounter with the big herd of cows was quite unusual and did give us all a considerable thrill. The getting of the two big bulls was quite typical. You just run your boat up on to them—and that's that.

The real thrill, however, comes in the abominable place that one must go to get them. If there is a section of this earth which is more inhospitable than the arctic ice, I'd like to know about it! From July 29th until September 4th we did not set foot on land—nothing but ice, ice, ice and then some more ice. How monotonous the looking at ice can become! And with it, high winds, snow, sleet and cold. Take it from me, it is anything but pleasant or comfortable hunting. But I guess that is what makes walrusen worth going after. And I suppose I'd welcome another chance to go back and do the same thing all over again.

FIRE!¹

*The fierce red tornado that wantonly
destroys fish, game and timber*

By MAURICE R. MERRYFIELD

WHEN is a match stronger than an ax? When it is used against a forest. The author of that old phrase, "Woodman, spare that tree!" was an earnest conservationist who had the right idea, but the wrong culprit. Man is still the greatest enemy of American forests, but the fellow who is careless with fire does more damage than those who know how to use an ax.

According to up-to-date figures of the United States Forest Service, growth in our forests would today substantially exceed the products we harvest from them if we, the people who use them, could keep from setting fires and could control tree pests and disease. More than 15 per cent of the outgo, or reduction in forest values, annually is sheer waste! If this waste could be saved and consolidated, it would of itself harbor more game than most hunters would have time to seek.

No American practice can so justifiably bear the label, "Wanton Waste," as our perennial habit of burning up about 25,000,000 acres of forested land each year. It is very probable that we have burned up more game than we have shot, and destroyed as much timber as we have harvested.

The lumberman wants to keep the forests productive; he wants

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new ones to grow—in fact, he won't have any business unless new forests come along. The hunter needs forested areas. Without them his sporting territory is severely reduced. Keeping our forests productive seems like a good idea. It serves the interest of everyone. Why, then, don't we do it?

Answer: Misinformation, carelessness, lack of understanding and just plain maliciousness.

Everyone welcomes a friendly, companionable camp-fire at dusk. The crackling, sputtering flames warm both body and soul, inspire many tall tales and savory dishes, and provide a feeling of security. This is fire under control.

On the other hand, nothing can be more terrifying than a raging, blasting forest fire. Hissing, roaring, exploding, it rushes rampant like a red tornado, devouring everything in its path—vegetation, animal life, towns and man. A forest fire converts timberland into a desolate heap of ashes and a graveyard of charred stumps, devoid of recreation value and worthless as a source of commercial forest wealth.

Over 50,000,000 animals were burned to death and 25,000,000 acres of their homeland swept by fire in 1940. Many thousands of fish—brook trout and bass—were boiled alive or poisoned by the heavy ash content in their streams. Rivers dwindled and became murky with eroded soil. All this occurred in the United States during 1940 because of 195,427 forest fires. Flippers (the people who thoughtlessly discard matches and cigarettes) were responsible for one quarter of this total!

For instance, a flipper was at large in Lolo National Forest one dry day in 1934. He started a fire. It was quickly detected, although it took a crew of 750 men to quench it at a cost of \$14,000.

On August 17 of the same year—a blistering hot day in California—a fisherman climbed to a cool retreat along Nelson Creek, 4,000 feet above sea-level. It is not definitely known whether this fisherman was a flipper or just plain careless. The fact remains that his visit was responsible for a fire that raged for eighteen days over 10,500 acres of rich timber adjacent to Nelson Creek. Count-

less times the flames jumped fire lines that had been frantically slashed out of the undergrowth by desperate, sweating fire fighters, working for days on end with little sleep.

Not until September 1 was the fire corralled. The area had to be carefully patrolled until the heavy rains of October. That fishing trip cost \$50,000 for fire fighting alone—not to speak of wildlife destroyed, timber consumed, and forest growth retarded for fifty to a hundred years. That was eight years ago. It will be many a summer before there will again be a cool, shady retreat along Nelson Creek.

The flipper has plenty of company.

There is the camp-fire neglecter, the careless debris burner and the ignorant or malicious incendiary. What a crew—what a record! They are responsible for 70 per cent of all the forest fires of the country. If the depredations of these four intentional or unintentional fire-bugs could be halted, man-caused fires would drop from the present figure of 85 per cent of the total conflagrations to about 15 per cent. Millions of wild creatures would be saved. Millions of acres of timberland would be granted uninterrupted productivity, and millions of dollars would be lopped off our annual fire-fighting bill.

In accomplishments the flipper vies with the incendiary for first place in the total number of fires set—flipper, 24 per cent; incendiary, 25 per cent, while the camp-fire neglecter is credited with only 6 per cent. His activities are far more effective in states where forest and river game abound. For example, in Pennsylvania he maintains a 30.6 per cent average, while his friends in New York run a 25 per cent figure, and in New Jersey 22 per cent.

In Maine, so abundant with favorite fishing holes, the flipper causes 49 per cent of the conflagrations. Michigan, dotted with lakes and rich in game, is a state where the flipper is active in starting 49 per cent of the fires. Maryland, with plenty of salt-and fresh-water fishing, reveals flipper fires as 47 per cent of the total, while its neighbor, West Virginia, has 45 per cent. Flipper-inspired fires in New Hampshire are 41.2 per cent; New York,

30.4 per cent; Pennsylvania, 30.8 per cent, and so on. Of course, all sportsmen are not flippers, but these Government figures should make them shiver.

Forest rangers still think more game is killed by forest fires than by stalking hunters. And there is nothing to show for their destruction, nothing except ashes. No delicious meals, no warm fur coats, no beautifully tanned hides, no finely mounted specimens for study—just a pile of ashes. In the well-protected National Forests alone it was estimated that 30,000 big-game animals, fur-bearing animals and game birds were killed by 1940 fires.

In 1935 a fire swept the Lenoxville forest area of North Carolina which contained one of the state's largest rookeries stocked with rare and beautiful herons. Experienced fire fighters fought and struggled to save this bird refuge, but the rookery went up in smoke. For days after the fire the older birds flew back and forth over the charred area, seeking their young. They were not to be found, for the ashes of 10,000 young herons had mingled with the charcoal of the trees that had once been their protection.

As hunters know, some animals, such as elk and deer, absolutely refuse, in the face of death, to leave their natural range. When flushed, partridge and grouse always fly in a predetermined direction, regardless of danger ahead. These habits have caused thousands of casualties. Despite the fact that they live in the water, fish, too, are fire victims. It is not unusual for a brook to reach boiling temperature. Those which survive high temperatures may succumb to wood-ash poisoning.

The few animals that make a successful getaway from blazing woods are bound to return to familiar haunts and become prey to starvation. A hunter can find precious little joy in watching stray creatures seek protection amid a forest of gaunt snags and charcoal, search for food over barren wastes, and look for companionship where only deathly silence reigns because all life has been snuffed out.

Forest rangers and fire wardens are unanimous in proclaiming that, given the proper public cooperation in fire prevention, they can cope with the 12 per cent to 15 per cent of the fires started

by natural causes, such as lightning. They also declare that, while the average hunter or fisherman is a true sportsman at heart, ready to play the game and help in every possible way, many are unconsciously the cause of forest damage.

Here are a few of the standard rules of forest etiquette:

1. Secure a camp-fire permit, where required, before starting on a camping trip. They are issued free by rangers and fire wardens.

2. Smoke only in areas clear of inflammable materials.

3. Be sure the match is out and break it in two before throwing it away.

4. Be sure that pipe heel, cigar and cigarette stubs are dead before leaving them, and never toss them into brush, leaves or needles.

5. Before building a fire, scrape away all inflammable material from a spot five feet in diameter; dig a hole in the center for the fire and keep it a small fire. Never build a fire against a tree, logs or brush.

6. Never break camp until the fire is out. Stir the coals while soaking with water, drench sticks on both sides, and wet the ground down around the fires. If water is unavailable, stir the embers and sticks in dirt and tread it down tight all around the fire area.

7. Never burn trash or debris on a windy day, or while there is the slightest possibility of the fire getting away.

8. Put out any small fire, if possible, and report others to the nearest ranger or fire warden.

It is a popular misconception that industrial cutting drains forests faster than they grow. The real truth is that in 1941 the total outgo (including industrial cutting and loss from fire and other causes) was almost equaled by growth. Fire keeps the balance in the red! Eliminate the man-caused fires, and growth will exceed the total drain, say Forest Service figures. This is not difficult to understand when it is realized that in the last five years 156,117,380 acres have been burned, an area approximately

equivalent to the combined states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin.

This total does not include the Tillamook fire in Oregon nine years ago which raged across 267,000 acres in eleven days. Virgin timbers consumed equaled the cut in the United States for the entire year of 1932. It was estimated that at least 10,000,000,000 board feet went up in smoke.

Tillamook was a bonfire compared to the holocaust that surged and roared across 6,400,000 acres in Minnesota some years earlier. This visitation cost lumber mills, villages and a town of 12,000 people. It took the lives of 800.

Forest-industry operators have been on the warpath against fires for a dozen years. They have cut the number of outbreaks caused by their operations to well under 2 per cent. Logging crews see to it that the few blazes which occur seldom get beyond control, for, after all, their livelihood, if not their lives, is at stake. Lightning speed squads, known as "Spark Chasers," now guard all lumbering operations and are especially alert during fire weather (drought accompanied by low humidity). These vigilantes are on the watch for sparks from falling trees, sparks from cables, sparks from engines, and sparks from the brake-shoes of railroad trains.

The big job of fire detection and fighting, however, is on the vast acreages where there are no commercial operations. The intricate and highly trained organizations maintained by private and Government agencies give good local protection in logging areas.

The management of modern forest-fire-fighting forces resembles the organization and execution of a blitzkrieg. The eyes of forest-fire fighters are the lonely watch-towers poking their heads above the surrounding country on mountaintops in timberland. Day and night, rangers and fire wardens keep an eagle eye for smoke.

On discovery of so much as a flicker, the spotter turns to the detailed map of the surrounding area, always spread below him, and points an arrow to the trouble. On this map he keeps a record of all the fires in the vicinity by a series of dots. Highways,

trails and popular fishing streams are usually heavily speckled, a sad commentary on the destructive path of man. If there were a master map of the United States for recording forest fires, the keeper would have to make a dot on the average of less than every three minutes throughout the year.

But back to the local fire spotter. A few minutes after the location of a blaze in a protected area the enemy is surrounded. The first alarm causes the advance of a light battalion to the scene by truck or airplane. Parachute troops are resorted to when the conflagration is in a particularly inaccessible area. Each man, in this early attack, has hose, water-tank and a light gasoline pump, especially designed for the purpose, strapped to his back.

Fire shock troops are followed by an infantry equipped with axes, picks and shovels to throw a fire line around the blaze. When necessary, big trucks, with three hundred to five hundred gallons of water, powerful pumps and complete equipment, form a third line of defense. The trucks are equipped with two-way radios to keep in touch with the spotter and supply centers.

Whining sirens and clanging bells, accompanied by the deafening roar of fire-engines darting down city streets, always awaken a thrill from the multitude. The courage and efficiency of these "smokies" also elicit the admiration and confidence of all who watch them in action. But for the forest-fire fighters there are no paved highways or police-controlled traffic to speed them on their journey. Only rustic single-lane wooded trails leading to a spot nearest the conflagration, from which the fire crew must haul hose and equipment through the unbroken underbrush. For them there are no gaping crowds to acclaim feats of skill and bravery—not even an ambulance to whisk the injured to a near-by hospital. Sometimes there is not even water to fight the fire—only axes, picks and shovels. The modern forest firemen, called upon to face dangers equal to any in the city, fight in the wilderness and die in obscurity.

Organized forest-fire fighting has some new tools. For example: fire meters, a new safeguard, have recently been installed near fire towers throughout the country. This ingenious device is

equipped with slides and pointers indicating wind velocity, temperature, relative humidity, the number of days since the last rain, and the condition of the grass and vegetation in the vicinity. Thus fire wardens, by checking with one another, can dispatch special fighter squads to the areas presenting the greatest potential fire hazard.

Private lumber firms spend an amount equal to that spent by the Federal Government for such protection, while each state adds to the total. This brings the annual fire-fighting bill to nearly \$10,000,000—one quarter of the average yearly \$40,000,000 fire loss.

Bravery, efficiency and ingenuity, backed by millions, are still no match for careless, heedless, indifferent and unscrupulous flippers, camp-fire neglecters, debris-burners and incendiaries. Education is the only hope. Alert to that fact, the Western forest operators, in cooperation with state officials, have launched one of the most effective fire-prevention campaigns ever organized. With activities in two states, their mottoes—"Keep Washington Green" and "Keep Oregon Green"—well dramatize the fertility and blessings of continuously productive forests in America.

TALLYHO CREEK¹

*The fastest, most furious fishing
in the world*

By DAVID M. NEWELL

TOM AND GEORGE may be just a couple of names to you, but they mean more than that to me. I hope Tom Houghton and George Franklin read this, for I'm going to talk about them a lot. They went up the creek with me and they came down the creek with me, and they're two of the best fishing buddies I've ever known—and I've got a list a mile long.

Down here in Florida we've developed a peculiar habit of yelling, "Tallyho!" when a big fish ties into us. Eaves Allison started it one night down at Midnight Pass when a 20-pound snook exploded under his pretty little top-water plug. "Tallyho!" squalled Brother Allison at the top of his lungs. "Tallyho! Tallyho! Tallypoosa!" Somehow it sounded most fitting to the occasion; so now we all yell "Tallyho!" In rare cases, when the fish is a real man, we even indulge in "Tallypoosa!" In fact, I might almost have called this yarn Tallypoosa Creek without telling too big a lie, for what I want to get in the record is that our creek is loaded down with big fish.

This particular creek is a branch of a certain river on the lower west coast of Florida. I say "a certain river" instead of Cooter River or Gator River or Pelican River (none of which is the right name) because for twenty-five years I have been telling about my

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favorite fishing holes and I'm getting tired of it. I've answered letters about duck marshes and snipe sloughs and quail woods and bass lakes and turkey roosts and panther prairies, but I refuse to divulge the location of Tallyho Creek. I found it, I named it, and I'll be doggoned if I'll tell where it is; so don't ask. I shall maintain a stony silence. If you show up at my place and look like a right guy and—most important of all—can afford to go up Tallyho Creek, I may take you there; but I'll be darned if I'll tell every Tom, Dick and Harry. Which brings me right back to Tom and George.

Tom and George had all of the qualifications necessary. They showed up at my place, they looked like right guys, and they could afford it. Mrs. Oliver Grinnell, who happened to be visiting me at the moment, insisted that Tom and George would do to take along.

"Mr. Franklin and Mr. Houghton are real fishermen," whispered she. "Neither one of them believed that last story I told, and I didn't believe their bass story."

Mrs. Grinnell is one of the best anglers left at large. She knows her fish and her fishermen; so Tom and George and I began to make plans. The lady had to go to Bimini to fill a date with a big marlin; so we left her out. If you knew Mrs. Grinnell, you'd know how hard a job that was.

The first thing was to find out if Tom and George could afford a trip up Tallyho.

"Boys," I said, "I'm not foolin'. This creek is loaded right down to the guards with the biggest, rustiest, orneriest fish I ever saw. They're mean.

"There are snook back in that creek the like of which have never been caught. There are some old goggle-eyed jewfish under those mangrove bushes that were feeding on 3-pound catfish when Ponce de Leon arrived. There are some hard-tailed jacks that will pull the guides right off your rods, and there are lady-fish that go so high you can change baits while they're coming down. There are tarpon——"

"Tarpon, did you say?" queried Tom with a gleam in his eye.

"Tarpon?" asked George, leaning forward and dropping nineteen cigars out of his vest pocket.

"Tarpon," I replied. "Plenty of 'em—and all sizes, from a pound to a hundred pounds. But I want to tell you now, boys, don't go down there half-cocked. When one of those big snook grabs a plug, he runs right out in the middle of the creek and jumps. If you'll watch his eyeballs while he's in the air, you can see that he's looking around for the nearest mangrove tree. That's all he jumps for—just to locate some mangrove roots. Then he cuts you off."

"Hold him," grunted Tom.

"Use heavier line and hold him," said George.

"Go ahead," I said. "But I think it would be a good idea to take along plenty of those surface plugs that snook like so well."

"What is plenty?" asked Tom.

"A dozen more than you think you'll need," I grinned—and meant it.

Evidently Tom and George decided that I did mean it, for when they arrived at Naples they had enough fishing tackle to outfit a dozen fishermen. Perhaps I shouldn't say much, for I took along two extra rods, an extra reel and line and a dozen silver-sided darters. I'd like to make it plain that a man's rigging gets about ten times as much hard usage in one afternoon of this sort of fishing as the average fresh-water angler's outfit gets in ten years. I had tried to explain this to Tom and George, and I could hardly wait to see them face the full realization of Tallyho Creek and the contents thereof.

We towed two skiffs up the river behind Cliff Sawyer's fast guide boat, and when we came to the mouth of Nash Creek (which is the right name—but try to find it) we divided our forces. Tom and I went with one guide, and George got into the other skiff with Cliff Sawyer.

"Watch yourself in that creek," called Sawyer. "There's been a heap of tarpon usin' in there."

I saw Tom's eyes gleam again as he tied on an aluminum-finish darter.

For a quarter of a mile there was no action. Not even a snook showed up. We cast faithfully, and I was delighted to see that Tom could put the bait right where he wanted it. Years of bass fishing in the lily-pads had taught him, and now he shot that plug up under the mangrove limbs with unerring accuracy. Every time it dropped into a dark pool I held my breath, but nothing happened.

I mentally dusted off my supply of alibis and looked them over. What would it be? Weather? No, the weather was perfect. Time of year? No, I had mopped up a week before. Tide? Ah, that would do! Tom was a fresh-water fisherman. I could feed him tide talk all day long and get away with it.

"I'm afraid the tide——" I began.

"Good gosh!" exclaimed Tom. "Look at that fish! It was a foot broad across the tail. What was it?"

"A tarpon!" I fairly shouted as the great fish rolled again about forty feet off our port bow. "He'll weigh seventy-five or a hundred. Cast over there."

"Not me," grunted Tom. "I don't fish for whales with fifty yards of silk line. I don't want any part of that fish." Mr. Houghton proceeded to cast in the opposite direction. As he began to retrieve his bait with short, sharp jerks the big tarpon rolled again, and Tom turned his head to look.

"I certainly hope nothing like that ever gets on——" he began.

Both of us nearly fell out of the boat as a 40- or 50-pound fish went into the air not ten feet from us. Now when I say "went into the air" I mean went into the air. If you've never fished for tarpon, you may find it hard to believe that a 40-pound tarpon will clear the water by six or eight feet. Well, I don't care whether you believe it or not. Ask Tom Houghton how high they jump, and you'll wish you'd believed me with my paltry eight feet.

Three times there was a flash of shining silver before Tom fully realized that it was his fish. Perhaps I should say before he did anything about it. He must have realized it, for there was a whirring sound caused by the beating of the reel handles against his knuckles. Then the tarpon jumped again and threw the plug

—clear back so that it struck the side of the boat. Tom's hands were shaking a little bit, and there was a funny light in his eye.

"Boy, oh, boy!" he said, almost in a whisper. "That's the most gorgeous sight I ever saw! That's the most beautiful, spectacular game fish I ever saw! I'll never forget that picture. That one strike was worth the whole trip. Boy, do those babies hit hard, and do they take to the air!"

"There's a whole school of 'em rolling," I said. "Let's do business."

It was my turn, and I tied into a little fellow of about 18 pounds or so. He put on a show that was worth going a long way to see. Then I brought him alongside, whipped to a frazzle. To my way of thinking, there is no more beautiful fish than a tarpon before it is removed from the water. As this little fellow lay there in the clear, sunny water his back and sides showed every color of the rainbow. Have you ever seen a wild turkey gobbler's breast feathers in the sunlight—the bronze and green and gold? Well, that baby tarp had 'em all.

Tom was in ecstasy. "That is the most beautiful, the most gorgeous, the most—in fact, the prettiest fish I ever saw."

As if in salute, the little fellow gave a wiggle and was gone.

We jumped nine tarpon in Nash Creek and lost a plug to a big snook. Tarpon fight fair in these narrow creeks, staying out in the middle and doing a lot of jumping. It is entirely possible to land a 100-pound fish on regular fresh-water casting tackle—bamboo rod and 18-pound silk line—for the current is swift and a good man with the oars can keep up with the fish fairly well. As a matter of fact, none of the fish which I hooked took much line—except when they broke it off.

It is exceedingly hard for the average bass fisherman to realize the strength and speed of a 50-pound tarpon. Perhaps you have been catching some big bass—10- and 12-pounders—and you think you are good. Well, don't try to snub a tarpon when he first hits. The easier you can handle him the better. I lost a 50- or 60-pounder on the third jump—too tight a line when he gave that savage shake of the head.

After an hour or two we drifted back into the main river and slowly made our way upstream toward where George and Cliff should be. At last we came to a bend. I'll never forget that bend, for on the shady side was an old submerged treetop, blown over by a hurricane. Simultaneously Tom and I cast up alongside this treetop. Have you ever seen a sizable river turn inside out? I have. So has Tom Houghton, but don't ask him to tell you about it unless you have plenty of time.

After the spray and tidal wave had subsided we found that each of us had a 25- or 30-pound tarpon, and they were jumping so fast that we didn't know which fish was whose. Tom lost his on the fourth jump, and I lost mine on the fifth. As a parting gesture my fish threw the plug back thirty feet and hit me in the hand with it.

Again we cast up to the old treetop, and this time each of us nailed a good-sized snook. We took four snook and jumped three tarpon around that old tree. The snook weighed about 10 pounds apiece, and a 10-pound snook is lots of fun in anybody's creek. Before we could cast again there was a faint cry from up river.

"Tallyho!" came the cry. "Tallyho!"

"George is doing business," said Tom with a grin. "Let's go see what the old son-of-a-gun has caught."

George was doing business, all right. He had stayed in one spot for two hours, and he had taken about 150 pounds of fish of eight different varieties—tarpon, snook, redfish, lady-fish, trout, snook, snapper and jellyfish. He had lost four plugs and half of his line, and he had a grin on his face a mile wide.

"Say," he grunted, when we rowed alongside, "you birds have missed all the fun."

"That's what you think," grinned Tom, winking at me. "You're not big enough to have as much fun as we've had."

"No?" jeered George. "Well, what do you think of this?"

Before we could express an opinion a big redfish ran clear across the river and broke him off on a snag.

"Not so good," said Tom. "You certainly are feedin' 'em the

wood. Our dozen consignment baits won't last long at that rate. What's the name of that little creek that comes in here?"

"Derned if I know," said Sawyer. "Don't nobody ever fish it, because it's too narrow and too full of snags to troll in."

"Troll?" questioned Tom. "Who wants to troll?"

"Most of my parties do," laughed Sawyer. "Most of 'em don't know how to cast."

"You ever fished that creek?" asked Tom.

"Me nor nobody else, so far as I know," grunted Cliff.

Tom looked at George, George looked at me, and we all looked at the creek.

"Boys," said George, "it is unanimously agreed that we fish in this creek immediately. All in favor——"

That's how come we found Tallyho Creek, and that's how come we named it Tallyho, and that's how come I'm going back next week. As Tom would say, "We fed 'em the wood!" Nine pretty new darters decorate the snags and roots. But what is a man going to do when a 100-pound jewfish boils up and simply absorbs his favorite plug? That's what happened to Tom. The jewfish started for the mangroves, and George began to have his fun.

"Hold him, Tom!" he shouted. "Don't give him any line! Don't give him any line! Oh, you darned old fool, don't give him any line! See? He's cut you off. If you'd held him like I told you to——"

I just followed along in my boat and watched the show. Now and again I indulged in a little wit, such as: "Hey, mister! Where do you get those reels that run backward?" or "What happened to that pretty silvery thing you had tied onto your line a minute ago?"

Tom and George were too busy cussing and razzing each other to pay any attention to me. At last we came out into a wide pool, and George caught a tarpon of the size he wanted for mounting—about 12 pounds. While he was admiring it I lost a bait to a big snook and barely jerked my last plug out of the mouth of a 50-pound jewfish. As a last touch I caught a 3- or 4-pound jack and a nice trout on the same cast. Tallyho! Tallyho! Tallypooooosa!

THE DANGEROUS GAME OF AFRICA¹

Which is the most dangerous—lion, elephant, leopard, buffalo or rhino? This has been a moot question always

By KERMIT ROOSEVELT

THE ELEPHANT, lion, buffalo, rhinoceros and leopard may be enumerated as the dangerous game of Africa. There is much dispute as to which of these should be given precedence. Personally, I think that it is largely a matter of individual experience. One man may have but very little experience in hunting elephant, and yet in each instance when he engages them he may have a close call, either through the nature of the individual elephant or through the manner of his hunting and the type of country. The same man may have met with many more lions and yet never sustained a serious charge. Quite naturally he will consider the lion less dangerous than the elephant, but another man in the same district may reverse the experience.

The rhinoceros, though truculent and active, cannot be considered as dangerous as either lion or elephant. Its vision is too poor and it is too stupid. If proper precautions are observed it can be dealt with at very little risk; but its hearing is acute, and for such a clumsy-looking beast it can display surprising agility and speed.

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The buffalo combines intelligence with strength. His great black bulk gives him a sinister and menacing look. Father and I hunted buffalo both in the papyrus swamps and in the thorn scrub country. Once we found ourselves in what might have turned into a most awkward situation when hunting the papyrus-dwelling buffaloes. We headed off a good-sized herd on the flat plains outside the swamp and wounded one, an old cow, which we needed to complete the museum group. The rest, and there were sixty or seventy of them, faced around in a most threatening manner.

There was not a tree to climb, and running would have been worse than futile; so we stood stock-still and held our fire. Fortunately the buffaloes thought better of it and, swinging around, filed off into the swamp.

I once wounded an old bull in the thorn scrub. He set off at a good rate, with myself and my gunbearers following the trail. Our quarry kept straight on for some distance, and then doubled back on his tracks and lay in wait for us. One of the natives, who was unusually sharp-eyed, spotted him and I finished him off before he could do any damage.

The leopard is savage, intelligent and wary, but its small size renders it less of a menace to life than either elephant or lion. If a leopard succeeds in getting in on you, you have a far better chance of surviving the encounter, although you are apt to ever afterward present a battered appearance.

There are other African game that will attack. My friend Edmund Heller, who was with us in Africa, writes from the Congo that he has been hunting gorillas and finds all that Paul du Chaillu told of their charging to be accurate. One old bull which he was trailing flew into a rage when he heard the hunters, and roared and beat his breast, charging right in upon them. The natives, who are much afraid of gorillas, took to their heels.

The hippopotamus and the crocodile are also at times responsible for loss of life, and among the antelope the sable, the roan and the bush-buck will often charge savagely when wounded. The lion, elephant, buffalo, rhino and leopard should, however, be left alone in their classification as dangerous game, for the

other animals which I have mentioned are not entitled to be included in the class with them.

Any animal's formidability as an opponent necessarily depends largely upon the manner in which it is hunted and the nature of the country which it inhabits. To begin with, hunting with dogs does not call for much skill upon the part of man, with the exception of the huntsman who has actually trained the hounds. The tracking is done by the hounds, and theirs is the chief danger when they come up with the quarry. The animal generally devotes its entire attention to the dogs, so that the main preoccupation of the hunter is to avoid hitting one of them. Even when elephant hunting, a small and intelligent terrier can keep the great pachyderm's attention, and allow you leisure and comparative safety in shooting.

There are certain animals which live in such dense jungle that securing a shot at them without the aid of hounds is almost entirely a matter of luck. The leopard and the jaguar come under this category, particularly the latter. You may hunt for years in South America without coming across a jaguar, even though you may be in country where they are plentiful. I have known African hunters who had spent years there and never seen a leopard; one of them, a game ranger, had followed his calling for thirty years. I believe on two occasions he had caught fleeting glimpses but not sufficient to afford a shot.

When I was hunting with Father for twelve months in Africa, it so happened that I was the only member of the expedition to catch sight of a leopard, and I was so fortunate as to shoot three. Two of them I took by surprise and dispatched them before they had a chance to take the aggressive, but the third charged savagely and I brought him down when he was only about six yards from me.

Hunting lion with dogs increases a hundredfold the probabilities of bagging them and diminishes almost equally the chances of damage to the hunter. The most sporting way to bag your lion is either to ride it down on a good pony, and then take your chance with an almost certain charge, or to track it down in bush country.

Both manners can be warranted to afford the hunter a genuine thrill.

Probably if hunted under similar circumstances, a tiger would prove an equally formidable antagonist; but long established custom, combined with the type of country and habits of the animal, has resulted in certain accepted forms of shooting tiger that give very little opportunity for the beast to inflict damage upon those who do the shooting. Tigers are usually shot in organized drives. Shikaries will receive word from the villagers that one or more tigers have been killing their cattle, or perhaps the unfortunate beasts that have been tied out in the jungles as bait in order to attract the tigers to a favorable locality for driving. The villagers know the most likely ravines or patches of jungle which the tiger would favor for his post-prandial siesta.

Beaters are duly summoned; the hunters are allotted their stations. Usually these take the form of machans or platform blinds built in trees. It is exciting work as the beaters get nearer and nearer, watching anxiously for a striped form to slip out into the open. If the machan is built low down or the hunter is stationed upon the ground, the tiger stands a chance of inflicting damage.

The other conventional method of tiger hunting is from the back of an elephant; and here the tiger has almost no opportunity to close in with the hunter. He may give the elephant a mauling, or even possibly get at the mahout (the native driver), but for him to reach the hunter is next to impossible.

Father considered the lion as the most dangerous African game to hunt, believing that while he was not so savage and apt to charge unprovoked as the leopard, the lion's size made him more to be feared when he did take the offensive. To the best of my recollection, he ranked the elephant next and the buffalo third; but many hunters rank the buffalo first. He is certainly possessed of great cunning, and when wounded will very often double back on his trail and lie in wait for his pursuer. He can also carry a most astonishing amount of lead, and will continue charging when so badly wounded that it would seem impossible for him to keep his feet.

Father had a number of charges from lions, but the most spectacular was that of an old male with a heavy mane, which he shot on the Sotik plains. Father and Tarleton and I had left camp at sunup, prepared, as you so often are in Africa, to meet with anything from an elephant to a dik dik, the diminutive little antelope no larger than a jack-rabbit. It is this great range of possible encounters that lends such charm to hunting in the chosen parts of Africa.

The morning proved a blank, as far as anything unusual was concerned, although there was no time at which some sort of game was not in sight, usually zebra or hartebeest, or gazelle, with perhaps a slumberous old rhinoceros, or a group of ungainly giraffes on the skyline. Toward noon we drew rein at the foot of a rocky hill, to give men and horses a midday rest while we ate our sandwiches. My pony had gone lame; so I turned him over to one of my native followers to lead back to camp, planning to finish out the day's hunt on foot.

We had no more than got well started upon our sandwiches when the man who had led my pony off reappeared, all out of breath, to report that he had seen a large lion stalking across the plain not far from the other side of the hill. Father and Tarleton hurriedly mounted and set off at top speed in pursuit. Father had a tall, lanky gunbearer, known as Kongoni, who was an excellent runner, and he and I made off after the ponies as fast as we could, in the hopes of seeing the fun.

Fortunately for us the lion had dined heavily and was in no mood to be hurried. Within the course of a couple of miles, Father and Tarleton had rounded him up. They had circled slightly, with the result that Kongoni and I were coming up, broadside on, and about three hundred yards distant when the excitement began.

Father and Tarleton had jumped off their ponies and turned them loose. The lion was crouching in the short grass about two hundred yards distant. Father's first shot inflicted nothing more than a flesh wound, and the great beast sprang to his feet and came bounding in, uttering great, angry coughs. It had not got

far when Tarleton's rifle cracked. He was an excellent shot, but the front sight had been knocked out of alignment and the bullet flew wide of the mark.

I saw Father drawing careful bead, and then all of a sudden the charging lion was brought up all standing, as if he had struck the side of a battleship. He seemed to dissolve into the prairie. A fine old fellow he proved to be and well deserving of the title of "The King of Beasts."

PINTAIL POINT¹

*Wildfowling over the rice beds, when a
mixed flight came in with the storm*

By KENDRICK KIMBALL

WIB MET ME at the lane—the same old Wib, unshaved, dressed in a torn hunting coat and a pair of tarry pants. Old Maggie, his Chesapeake, padded at his heels with a litter of solemn, yellow-eyed pups which added a series of distracting yaps to his greeting.

The leathery features of my host broke into a smile, but not the polite, formal kind worn for guests at his shooting lodge. It was a smile inspired by some circumstance of unusual omen—one that bubbled from the very wellsprings of his being.

“It’s goin’ to blow,” he announced in a voice like the roar of waves against the headlands of Lake Huron. “Out of the nor’west, too. And them mallards will come bustin’ off the bay for shelter.”

Wib’s state of mind was both logical and understandable, for he had dedicated his life to the pursuit of “them mallards.” They were a contrary lot, refusing to move into the pot-holes until sunset and departing when the first grayness filtered from the east. At least once a season, however, when storm routed them from their sanctuary, they drove into the marsh in long, straggling files, accompanied by widgeons, pintails and knots of green-winged teal.

In recent years misfortune conspired to busy Wib elsewhere

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on the red-letter days. When a "whooper" piled up the bay the previous fall, his cheek was puffed twice its normal size by an ulcerated tooth. Another opportunity found him in bed with a wrenched back, result of a tumble from a bee-tree, and on a third occasion he was one of a jury whose deliberations on a fence-line suit were both quickened and confused by a parade of ducks past the county court-house.

"This time I'm goin' to clean up on them big bottle-necked lunkers," he promised. "In the mornin' the bay will be whinin' like a sick cat. They'll buck the storm into Pintail Point before swingin' into the marsh, and we'll be settin' there to nail 'em."

A glance toward the rice beds disclosed nothing prophetic of good shooting. October was in her most indolent mood. Bees droned in the pale sunlight; frogs stirred in the sedge, and over the hay meadow a few butterflies danced against the frosted sumac bobs. On a near-by reef a flock of waders in gleaming salt-and-pepper plumage picked up crustaceans under the bills of a score of dozing gulls.

"I'll admit it don't look much like a weather change," confessed my host as he swabbed his brow with a bandanna. "But my information never fails. That's why I wired you to come."

"Your information?" I echoed.

Knowing Wib's failing, my spirits collapsed. Like many a son of the open spaces, he was somewhat of a mystic. He was rational enough in his every-day affairs, but when ducks were the object of his endeavors he became prey to an outrageous set of hunches and superstitions.

"I suppose you mean that goose bone over the kitchen stove?" I asked fearfully.

Grunting a denial, Wib drew a grimy and yellowed almanac from his back pocket. He turned page after page of testimonials and sketches of the digestive apparatus, pausing with a flush of pleasure at a calendar illustrated by signs of the zodiac.

"Look here," he demanded triumphantly, shoving the torn page under my very nose. "'Professor Zeno's weather forecast,' " he read. "'Compiled by the celebrated Arabian seer and astrolo-

ger.' Tomorrow's October 23, ain't it? Wal, here it is in black and white: 'severe gales from the nor'west.'"

"And you had me drive two hundred miles on the strength of that?" I gasped. Attempting to be patient, I showed him the official Government forecast in my newspaper. "'Fair and calm with slowly rising temperature,'" I quoted.

Wib regarded me with pity. "The weatherman is just a guesser."

"Anyhow, he doesn't try to predict a year in advance," I countered. "That almanac you depend on was printed last fall. It's silly, ridiculous."

"That's what you think," Wib snapped back, eyes alight with fanaticism. "The weather, every schoolboy knows, is caused by position of the sun, moon and stars in relation to each other. A feller like this here Zeno can dope it out a long time ahead. The weatherman wouldn't dare, even if he knew how, because he'd kick himself out of a job. Simple as skinnin' a mud-hen."

I turned away, disbelief confirmed by the cloudless sky and perpendicular columns of smoke from the village. Everywhere I saw evidence of Wib's preparations. A freshly caulked skiff, a pair of oars against the boat house and a heap of decoys with new swivels and anchor ropes awaited our pleasure.

"Maybe we can find a few woodcock in those tag alders by the river," I proposed. "There's no use in our getting up before daylight. We'll sleep late, of course, and——"

"We won't do no such thing," Wib expostulated. "Oil up that gun! Get out them boots! Fill up the shell box! The perfessor has been 100 per cent right all fall, and he ain't goin' to let us down now!"

Awakening at midnight, I groped to the window. The quiet was so pronounced that I heard the rustling of uneasy wings over the shoals. A mallard lifted its feeding call to a moon looming through the stars like a blob of butter. Teal also raised their voices as they splashed in the weed beds and waddled about the bars. Then a shadow fell across the yard, and through the inert leaves of the willows I saw Maggie on a round of the premises.

Not a vestige of hope. A cloudy sky or even a touch of dampness would have been encouraging. I resented Wib's untroubled sleep below, but consoled myself by picturing his chagrin in face of a clear dawn and my comments at the breakfast table.

I was awakened, however, by a sharp pounding. Other noises beat their way into my consciousness: those of pots and pans, someone struggling to put on a pair of boots and a dog pattering excitedly over the floor. Yet the house seemed filled with additional sound which I could not identify.

"Daylight in the swamp—roll out!" Wib yelled briskly from the foot of the stairs.

I sat up in bed, heart beating wildly. A draught of cold, raw air sluiced through the screen as the wind tore under the eaves with a howl. The roof creaked and groaned under a pelting rain. Trees tossed their limbs in torment, lashing the side of the house and releasing branches which whirled through the blackness with every gust. Through the symphony a low, throbbing note beat like a drum.

Wib, a steaming platter in his hand, accepted the storm as a natural and logical consequence.

"Seas are breakin' over the reefs," he declared. "No duck can stand it on the bay today. The wind will take the tail feathers off those blacks and greenheads if they try to ride it out."

I glowed with elation at the prospect of matching wits again with the mallard. One does well to select it as his favorite duck. It furnishes sport on the season opening to gunners in shirt sleeves, and to the muffled, blue-faced veterans who peer through the bleakness at the close. A few, of heroic mold, winter in the northern tier of states, foraging along icy creeks and gleaning in the fields rather than surrender to frost.

There are faster ducks and those less reluctant to decoy. The mallard lacks some of the patrician qualities of the canvasback, the bluebill's dash and the brilliant flight performance of the teals. But its intelligence seldom sleeps. When it spills from the skies, wing-bars flashing iridescently, a feather or two floating in the wake of the charge that struck it down, no gunner, no matter

how often he has centered such a target, fails to respond to a feeling of satisfaction and achievement.

Breakfast was a formality, for we were both too anxious to be on our way. Groping through the inkiness, I followed Wib to a pen where he gathered a half dozen live decoys and thrust them into sacks.

"Punt's a half mile 'cross the flats," he shouted back at me as he set forth.

I plodded after him as best I could, thankful for the dry footing on the ridges. We sloshed through a series of shallow ponds, barely able to distinguish the grasses twining about our legs. More than once a black object, bounding from some sheltered pocket, hung momentarily against the pewter tones of the east before it vanished with a reedy whistle.

"Teal," Wib proclaimed amid the gabbled complaints of the decoys. "Lot of 'em in here. Better watch out for the soft spots where they've dug up the sago."

I slumped wearily into the narrow punt. We nosed into a channel through a bed of rushes where blackbirds clucked a sleepy protest over our invasion. The darkness lifted rapidly, and through the misty half light we discerned the bay, convulsed by combers, over which masses of ducks rolled down-wind like smoke.

"Point's just aroun' the bend," yelled the dripping Wib as he heaved with the punt stick. "Unwind the anchor ropes on them wooden decoys. Clouds are liftin' in the nor'west—blow's comin' harder."

The live birds regained their composure after a preliminary splashing and ducking. Eighty feet beyond them, a scattered flock of redheads and canvasbacks tugged at their moorings. We crouched behind a screen of cattails on a mucky promontory, posted at opposite ends of the punt, thereby enjoying that important comfort, a firm, dry seat.

Dawn was filled with testimony of the fury of the storm. The wind flung streamers of spray over the reefs, where yellowlegs and plover huddled disconsolately. Jack-snipe flitted about us

like bats. A gallinule, or "rice hen," fluttered above the vegetation, but the gale proved too much for its comparatively feeble wings, and it plumped with undignified haste into the muck, disappearing with the rapidity of all members of the rail family.

I shivered abjectly. The rain drummed a tattoo upon my back and trickled in widening streams down my sleeves. Our shells were in a hard pail, the humblest and most serviceable of waterproof containers. Gulls streamed overhead in gray battalions, melting into the horizon that promised nought but further unpleasantness. But Wib's sight was keener than mine. He nudged me as three wavering dots broke through the murkiness and threshed to a precipitate landing among the live decoys.

"Mallards," he whispered. "Five minutes before shootin' time. If we keep quiet, they might stay."

His voice sounded dubious, for five minutes is a long while for mallards to remain deceived. Through the cattails I glimpsed the newcomers, stiff as grenadiers on parade. I was not surprised when they edged away, suspicious of the wooden stool and fearful of what the dark, shifting background of vegetation might contain. Stooping to remove my gloves, I launched them into space with a bound when I accidentally knocked over a can used for bailing.

Wib eyed me reproachfully, but the necessities of the moment were too urgent for speech. Masking his disappointment with a smile, he cut an armful of grass to patch our blind in the rear. As I rose to assist him a cluster of scurrying, shadowy bodies emerged from the grayness. They whisked down to the stool, extended their legs and fanned their wings while I stood as if paralyzed.

The next instant I clutched desperately for my gun. The ducks found none of their kind in the puttied and shot-scarred array beneath them. Perhaps they saw me against the vegetation, for they scattered like a pile of leaves struck by a gust. Two of the mounting forms were suspended above the mud-daubed rib of my barrel. When they slithered to the water, I swung on to a third, half expecting to blast the atmosphere beneath it. But my

snap shot sent the target spinning, for, struggling in an air pocket, it was almost stationary when I pressed the trigger.

"Bluebills," grunted Wib, still working on the blind.

I knew he was mistaken—no sea duck is capable of quitting the surface at a sharp angle. Regretting the absence of Maggie, at home with her puppies, I left my companion to his labors. Before I had proceeded ten feet in the punt, I bewailed my awkward use of the long, ungainly paddle with which such craft is propelled on Saginaw Bay. Three specks were floating into an arm of rushes where a possibility of disaster was presented by a reef frothing with whitecaps.

I gathered the bag with an ineptitude that must have been amusing. They were drake greenwings in winter plumage and not much larger than a jack-snipe that tacked across the channel. On my return I squinted through the mist at my companion, whose gun, hitherto unnoticed, was still in the punt. He was a sorry spectacle, crouched in ooze within an inch of his boot tops, his dejected gaze on another band of teal bouncing from the decoys like so many rubber balls.

When the blind-patching job was completed, ducks shuttled down the channel without interruption. The majority were too low to see the stool in the shadow of the vegetation. Mergansers were among them, long-bodied and rakish; redheads, ringbills flying in reckless formation; canvasbacks in geometrical pattern, and a scattering of pintails, bluebills and widgeons. A line of ruddies went past, racing pell-mell a few inches above the surface.

Our attention was distracted by a clamor from the decoys. A lone mallard about to drop among them reversed himself with surprising celerity. He was so near that we noted the curled feather on his tail, the yellow leg and the ring of white around his neck. It was well we fired quickly, for he had rocketed to the limit of range when he crumpled.

I had waded no more than a few yards when Wib's hoarse command sent me tumbling back into the punt. Several hundred pintails poured over the marsh in a disorganized column. They wheeled in desultory fashion, intent on returning to their meal of

sago and water potatoes after a brief tour of the skies. But a group of the adventurous broke away from the rear guard and sailed alongside in a sweeping curve—six big, long-necked ducks, buffeted by the gale.

True to pintail tradition, they were deliberate in their curiosity. Boring up-wind, they strung over the vegetation in the same leisurely fashion to appraise a half dozen pot-holes in the rice. But these refuges, tenanted only by coots, were not to their liking, and they bunched for a sharp turn down the channel.

"Crack 'em on the first swing," Wib whispered as their wing-beats expressed indecision. "Can't wait on those fellers." He shifted his chew to his right cheek with ease born of long practice. "Still comin'. Now!"

When he poked his muzzle over the top of the blind, the formation broke into six speeding fragments. Wib's drake faltered when the charge raked it. A pinion curled at the second explosion, and the bird, stone-dead, thwacked the water with such violence that the feathers were stripped from the breast-bone. The mark I selected seemed too high for sane shooting. But the wings folded, the neck dropped limply on to the back and a twisting bundle of feathers terminated its plunge by a splash and a smother of bubbles.

Wiping the water from his face, Wib discoursed on the psychology of the species. "Most of the time you can count on 'em bein' pretty leery," he asserted. "If they saw a few pintails among the decoys, they'd come in better. Take a few dead birds, put their necks in forked sticks, lay 'em out natural like, and an awful lot is added to the drawin' power of your flock.

"But like all ducks, they have their dumb brethren too," he ruminated. "A bunch of forty dropped into bluebill decoys when I was settin' on Sand Point one day. Flopped right into a rummy-lookin' outfit of blocks that weren't entitled to fool a butterball. They were tired and hungry, and had come a long distance. Funny bird, the pintail."

We sat back, lost in retrospection. The air became colder, the wind more biting. Our circulation was restored by a flight of teal

dislodged from the reef by a redoubled assault of the waves. They darted down to pot-holes, flared up for a mad circle of the locality, and dashed away in the aimless and erratic manner of snipe. When they hurtled over us from behind, the most frequent method of approach, they seemed as elusive as a wisp of thistle-down. One had no time to calculate leads, to line up the sights on the bill and jerk them ahead the required distance.

My eagerness spoiled several chances at mallards. Misled by their size, particularly that of the red-legged Canadian blacks, I made the common error of firing too quickly. As they circled behind us, I committed another mistake: that of bobbing my head to follow their progress. Several small flocks shied off abruptly, having seen the motion of my hunting cap or my tense face pressed against the cattails.

Other discouraging factors arose. The decoys nearly burst their throats with invitations to crows stringing to the uplands. But when ducks hove in sight, they tiptoed for delicacies or floated in silent contemplation of their lot. The most aggravating incident occurred when a pair of pintails glided from the heavens at an angle that indicated a willingness to dispense with maneuvers. Just when we were about to shoot, a hen among the decoys flailed the water in a panic, her bill caught in the neck ring at which she had been picking all morning. The pintails banked suddenly and twinkled away.

Then, to exasperate us further, a wedge of canvasbacks bowed their wings, but swept on without satisfying their curiosity. They were followed by a troop of redheads. The latter veered toward the bay at the instant it seemed they would upend their broad, chunky bodies above the outer edge of the fleet.

Wib's theory for the conduct of the last two flocks seemed plausible. "They know it ain't more than a foot deep here," he grumbled. "Been through the channel in calm weather and seen the bottom. Or else they're wised up by the reefs." He sighed wearily. "Butterballs and mergansers hang out in water like this, but the big divers want depth and plenty of room."

As if in contradiction, two bluebills, tired of fighting the gale,

broke from the van of a flock. With that lack of wariness so characteristic of the species they sailed to the stool in a graceful curve. Though they were heavy birds, not the underdeveloped youngsters one so often encounters in October, their deportment was that of novices. We gathered them in.

The next visitors were hooded mergansers, a duck with better qualities than the name implies. They weaved about us confusedly before their swift descent to the stool. Their crested heads and bristly tails lent oddity to their appearance as they stretched their feet to cushion their contact with the surface. Their leave-taking was as impetuous as their arrival, for they slanted broadside into the wind at our bombardment and tore wildly across the channel, leaving two drakes, whose crops were filled with vegetable food, as a penalty for their ill judgment.

A widgeon whizzed past at a quartering angle. Then, cupping the air with their tails, three mallards swooshed into the live decoys after a short turn into the wind. Two dropped at our salvo, but the third, a bit wary of the layout, was well on his way to safety when our sights found him against the clouds. He slopped into the water and swam for the rushes with his head up and neck extended.

My companion acted with characteristic decision. A dash through the decoys brought him within questionable range. It was a graphic picture: the man silhouetted against the sky, whipped by wind and rain but rigid as a statue, his legs braced against the current, his piece to his shoulder. And then the mallard slipped through the waves to the yellowed vegetation, where it would lie flat as a shingle until a favorable opportunity to skulk away.

Wib's muzzle jerked upward, and a strong of shot splashed behind the target. He had failed to account for the wind. Again the pellets ripped into the waves, but this time the charge was too high. He pressed trigger again when the mallard rose on top of a comber, where it hung momentarily within a yard of its objective. But the bird was not destined to die miserably of its wounds or be picked to pieces by gulls. Through the curtain of spray

lifted by the charge I saw an inanimate patch of black drifting toward the channel, then Maggie plunging through the water on her way to get what otherwise would have been a lost bird.

"Thought I told you to stay home with them pups!" Wib shouted, but the Chesapeake had reached the deep water by this time and with powerful strokes was on her way to the drifting mallard.

She had probably listened to our shooting all morning and finally decided the pups could take care of themselves for a while.

"We've got enough," Wib declared after checking the bag. "We can afford to let a few go for next year's breedin' stock." His eye twinkled. Then his reddened features broke into a grin, and I knew what was coming. "Next time don't believe what you see in the paper," he chided. "Git your weather dope from headquarters—from me and the perfessor."

"Hit it lucky, eh?" asked the gasoline-station attendant, peeping into the back of my automobile. "Down at Wib Sawyer's place, I suppose. He's the blamedest cuss I ever knew. Smells a storm a week in advance."

"He lays it to a patent-medicine almanac he got some place," I revealed. "Says it predicted every blow this fall."

"That thing?" the attendant asked disgustedly. "It came out in 1923, but the days fell on the same dates as 1934; so I ripped off the year and gave the danged book to Wib as a joke!"

MISS SEDUCTION STRUTS HER STUFF¹

Bagging a big gobbler in the South Carolina pinelands

By ARCHIBALD RUTLEDGE

FOR MANY YEARS I have had a positive superstition about luck on the last day—sometimes during the very last hour. A thrilling and possibly dramatic experience that I had on January 2, 1933, has confirmed me in this way of thinking. True, the affair did not happen on the last day of the wild turkey season in South Carolina, for that is February 28; but it was the last day for me, as I was scheduled to leave for the North early on the morning of January 3.

That summer an old wild turkey hen raised a flock of sixteen birds on my plantation. I had had reports of them, and high hopes were mine that they would still be there on my Christmas visit. But certain turkey-minded friends and neighbors anticipated me; and while they killed only one or two of the birds, they succeeded in utterly scattering and demoralizing the flock. All through the holidays I hunted for them. Their tracks were found in the sandy roads. I once heard a hen drowsily calling at daylight; once I saw one about half a mile down an old woodland trail. But nary a shot was mine.

These birds were genuinely wild in every sense of the word: of the ancient pure wild strain, with no admixture of domestic blood

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—lovely bronze plumage, black heads, pink legs and a general aspect of being tailor-made. They were so keen of sight and hearing as to be able to detect a wink or a whisper at shotgun range; so silent and canny as to make an attempt at stalking a ludicrous thing. You know the feeling that I had as the precious days passed: that the game was unquestionably there, but that it was too smart to permit me to come up with it.

Finally my last day came. While I had had excellent sport with ducks and deer, it looked as if I were going to be a total washout on the turkeys. However, at about four o'clock that afternoon, with the kindly Southern sun shining genially and with no wind stirring, my three boys and I decided to try the last chance.

Scattered groups of the birds had several times been reported to me by negroes as crossing an old abandoned road—usually at about five o'clock in the afternoon, evidently on their way to roost in the great river-swamp. I had not been able to discover their bedroom, yet had a fair notion of where it likely was. I posted my boys on the road and then walked a half mile down the river-bank. My idea was to call a little in order to lure any lonely birds toward the standers posted in front of me. It sometimes happens that for weeks at a time wild turkeys will follow the same range, day after day.

At the place where I stopped, two old rice-field banks converged and met the bank of the river. It seemed a strategic spot, though I had never tried it before. All about me were giant cypresses, softly alight in the rays of the setting sun; lonely abandoned rice-fields, grown head-high in marsh; solitary pines; thickets of cane and alder and birch. Except for the firm footing on the leaf-strewn banks, the country was very wet. As I sat down to call I heard a deer tramping round in the marsh across the river, gray squirrels barking and scuttling about on the leaves, wild ducks hurrying toward the delta, and the big owls beginning their weird hooting.

At a moment when some of these sounds abated, I touched my call.

This call is one of many I have made. Most of them have had

faults of tone—either squeakiness, of a tone too high-pitched, or sounding more like something else than a turkey, or prone to emit a sudden false note that is always bad news for a turkey hunter. But on account of the depth, certainty and mellow tone of this particular box, I had christened her Miss Seduction. I have tested her many times, and I have found that she will do almost anything except actually kill my gobbler for me. On several occasions she has embarrassed me by calling up old turkey hunters to me. I like them, but there's a closed season on them.

For many years I have experimented with making box calls for turkeys from all kinds of woods. Red cedar I have rejected on account of the shallowness of its tone and its inclination to squeak; seasoned poplar is excellent, as is Western fir; dried maple and holly are good. I like willow best because of the quality of the wood, the smooth texture and high tension of the grain, and the mellow tone that can be drawn from such a box. Soft chalk is always applied to the calling-lip of the box and is used to cover the slate caller as well. I have made box calls with the shuffling tops, but the other type is handier and has been more effective for me. It seems a general principle that the best tone is to be had from a wood of medium hardness, such as chestnut or willow. If the wood is too hard, the qualities of depth and vibrancy will be absent.

To call a turkey one will perhaps do best if he will put himself in the place of the bird and will call in such a manner that, if he were the bird, he would come. A great many things are to be considered: the time of day (of course, they call best just after and just before roosting); the condition of the atmosphere (a windy day is bad, and a rainy day not so good); the place from which the calling is done, for it should be of such a character that the bird would naturally haunt it; and then the calling itself, which is a thing to be learned rather than told of.

I may say, however, that an amateur will call too often, too loudly and with too little variation in the tone. A wild turkey is a patrician, and he does not appreciate any member of his tribe's overflowing and drowning him with too much gushing. Of course,

in the mating season few birds are more garrulous than wild gobblers. But in the hunting season they are almost as silent and non-committal as they are wary.

During the next twenty minutes I called about seven times. It pays not to be too urgent. Unless I am mistaken, it is the long, sweet pleading quality of the first note that usually does the work. I had had no answer; but, as every experienced hunter knows, a wild turkey will often come silently to a call. Some answer and come. Some do not answer and come. Some never answer and never come. Some come running; some flying; some walking fast; some stealing along furtively. I have had an old gobbler come within thirty yards of me from behind before I detected his approach.

Down went the sun, suffusing the wild, sweet world with a golden after-glow. I had heard no gun from my standers. It looked about all over. But suddenly I heard a great commotion in the marsh across the river. At first I thought it must surely be a deer jumping in to swim across. Yet when I turned quickly to look, there came a splendid gobbler, flying almost straight for my call. I knew that I ought to get my gun up while he was flying; because if a wild turkey is on the ground near you, the matter of getting your gun on him is just one of those critical things that is awfully hard to maneuver. In the two seconds that it takes you to put it on him, he's going to be executing the greatest vanishing act you ever saw.

Fifty yards from the river-bank the glistening king of the swamplands set his wings and sailed, alighting high and dry about thirty-five yards from me. I made a clean kill with 4's. Miss Seduction had done her work. In forty years of hunting this was the first time I had ever called a wild turkey across a river. And any hunter can easily understand the thrill I got out of it—especially since it was sundown on my last day.

It is not usually worth while to call from the same place after a shot has been made there. But I love the river and the swamp in those mystic fading lights, and there might be a bare chance for more sport.

Sundown on a plantation has many compensations even if a hunter never shoots his gun. Winter there is kindly, and the coming of dusk does not mean a consequent fall in temperature. A man may sit it out without getting chilled. About me were primeval woods, beautiful with the full-foliaged water-oaks and the moss-bannered cypresses. I could see a little way up the river the immense and shaggy live-oaks, whose small sweet acorns wild turkeys prefer to all other winter food. Not until they have harvested this crop will they turn to the somewhat bitter acorns of the water-oaks. They also relish the hard black seeds of the American lotus, black-gum berries, gall-berries and the fruits of the wild greenbriar.

In the old days of baiting turkeys, before beneficent laws were passed against this practice, the birds would come almost equally well to corn, peas and rice. I once examined the crop of a wild turkey that had in it a mixture of salted almonds and whole snails! The former he must have gleaned from the waste of some hunter's luncheon; the latter he probably ate, partly for the food value and partly for the grit in the shell.

It was now very dusky in the swamp. The river appeared wan and mysterious. Far up the stream I could see the lights of home shining in the twilight. Once more I touched Miss Seduction. It really seemed too late; yet while I have known some wild turkeys to take the roost long before sundown, I have known others to delay their retiring until it was almost too dark to see a limb on which to perch.

On the farther side of the old wooded bank coming down through the middle of the swamp, I had heard a brown thrasher scuffling in the leaves. This sound grew a little loud and unfamiliar. Save for his keen head, this turkey was completely hidden by the bank. But he was only thirty-five yards away, and coming closer. At the range which he had already reached, I would not have been afraid to try to chance at his head alone; but I had no shells save the two in my gun, and they were loaded with buckshot. All my turkey-shot, save the lone 4's I had already fired, I had given to my boys. Now, a man stands a beautiful

chance of missing a wild turkey with buckshot, whatever the range; and to shoot at his head with buckshot is almost certainly to miss him.

The gobbler would pass me on my left. The old bank, behind the shelter of which he was walking, was perhaps of more advantage to me than to him, for I waited for him to get his head behind the bank and then got my gun up, leveling it through a small break in the dyke, across the aperture of which his majesty would pass.

The west was barely glimmering with the last streaks of day and the dusk in the swamplands was almost night when the great gobbler suddenly filled the opening in the bank. I could barely discern the white sight of my gun against his dark and splendid form. I touched the trigger, and immediately stood up.

What I saw was a big gobbler with a broken wing running for the tall marsh as if a dozen wildcats were after him on wings. I could not really lay the gun on him right, but I let drive with my last shell in his direction. Silence profound settled over the river and the swamp. It was my last shot of the hunting year.

A few minutes later I found my second gobbler, killed by a single buckshot in the neck. With my two wild turkeys over my shoulder, I was soon on the homeward road, along dim starlit paths, familiar to me since boyhood days, toward the old home that has always been to me a beloved sort of shrine for a thousand memories of the river, the pinelands, the broom-grass field, the brooding solitary swamps and all their wonderful inhabitants.

SIX-GUN FACTS AND FABLES¹

*No man can shoot a gun more accurately
than the gun will shoot*

By JACK SIMPSON

IF YOU HAD BEEN in Taylor and Look's Gem Saloon in El Paso on the evening of April 14, 1884, you would have seen some of the facts of the six-gun dramatically enacted. Around the room was a long row of chairs filled with onlookers, mainly just ordinary loafers whiling away the spring evening. In one chair, however, sat Wyatt Earp.

Earp was new to El Paso, but the cow punchers and saloon gossipers had spotted him and passed the word along that this was the young fellow who had been marshal of Ellsworth, Kansas, some ten years back. He was marshal for just about an hour, during which he had calmly arrested Ben Thompson, one of the toughest gunmen that ever came out of Texas with the longhorns, when Ben had the whole town and the ex-marshal treed with his famous shotgun. The boys also recalled that this same Earp had shown up in Dodge City, Kansas, a couple of years later when the Texas cattle trade had moved westward, making Dodge the "Cowboy and Cattle Capital of the World."

Yes, sir; this was the same fellow who became chief deputy marshal of Dodge and enforced considerable order when they all said it couldn't be done. The old-timers had said there was "No

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law west of Kansas City and, west of Fort Scott, no God." Earp had not argued, but had made his own laws about checking guns upon entering town and one thing and another and had put the fear of God into those who didn't fall in line.

So they all hung around to see what would happen. El Paso was far from a peaceful little village herself, and some excitement was sure to follow the arrival of such a distinguished visitor.

The door swung open with a bang, and into the smoke-filled room strutted the local bad man, Bill Rayner, dressed in gray trousers, black boots and coat, white linen, black sombrero and a pair of ivory-stocked Colts. Being somewhat of an actor, Mr. Rayner paused to survey the crowd and give all a chance to absorb the grand picture. As a final touch of elegance and arrogance, he carried a pair of gray dress gloves in his hand.

After the proper dramatic pause, Rayner strode down the long line of chairs, stopping at each to offer a few taunting remarks punctuated with a flick of his gloves. No one rose to interfere, and he slowly worked down the line toward Earp. All realized that this was the intended climax of the show.

As the bad man reached Earp the room was hushed and every one strained to catch the conversation, which ran about like this:

"You're Wyatt Earp, I take it."

"That's right."

"Did you ever meet any Southern gentlemen?"

"I've met a few gentlemen here and there."

"Do you know why a Southern gentleman carries his gloves?"

Earp, not being given to much talk, said in a quiet voice: "I know what you intend to do, if that's what you mean, and I don't see why you put on all this show. Why didn't you come right on over to me if you wanted to see me?"

Rayner hesitated and changed his tactics. "Will you have a drink?"

"Certainly."

At the bar Earp stated that he was not armed, and the anticipated excitement failed to materialize. The boys did not have to nurse their disappointment long, however, as Rayner stamped

into Lou Rickabaugh's billiard and gambling room adjoining and started to annoy "Cowboy Bob" Rennick at a game presided over by young Bob Cahill.

When Rennick asked him to quit, Rayner fancied he was insulted, and said he was going to get a drink and would be back soon and give Rennick his chance. As the bad man left the room Rennick had the excellent judgment to borrow a gun from the dealer, Bob Cahill, and rise from his chair.

Immediately the brave challenger burst through the doorway from the bar with a gun in each hand. The right one roared as Rayner put four bullets into Rennick's vacant chair. Rennick coolly took aim from his new position and fired two shots into the bad man's anatomy, from which he died soon afterward.

But the end of the drama was not yet. Being a great actor, Rayner's work lived after him. Shortly Buck Linn came roaring down the street with his guns out and marched into the Gem Saloon. He let loose a few wild shots, loudly and profanely announced that he was looking for young Bob Cahill, and left. Soon word came from another saloon that Linn thought Cahill had killed his fellow actor and bad man, Rayner, and that he was coming back to "cut Cahill down."

Upon hearing this startling news, Cahill borrowed a gun and asked what he should do, saying he had never been in a gun-fight in his life. Earp advised him to clear out and let them quiet Linn. Cahill refused to duck, and Earp then told him to wait until Linn got close, take careful aim right at his body and let 'er go.

Just as Earp finished, Linn came through the door, shooting fast and furious as he circled the tables. Cahill followed instructions and waited until Linn was just a few feet away, shot twice, and saw Linn fall dead right at his feet.

The final curtain fell on this lively little three-act play. Rayner had come on to the stage dressed fit to kill, and he was killed. His drunken and loud-talking partner was likewise very dead. And what of the other actors in the play?

Earp, most certainly not afraid of any man who ever walked and who had thrown plenty of lead when necessary, had evaded

a fight with a bragging, would-be bad man by using his head. It turned out later that he intended to take a chance, unarmed as he was, by hitting Rayner on the chin if the latter had forced the play. Rennick and Cahill were ordinary fellows—not gunmen in any sense—but both had come out unscratched because they were sober, did no wild talking or shooting, but took their time and shot to kill when they were forced to protect themselves.

And so it was with many of the old gun-fights of which we hear highly colored versions. There were in the old days, from the Civil War until the close of the century, many bad men and would-be bad men, some very good shots, some fair and some who could not hit a man at much over ten feet. But it is surprising that many of the famous bad men died young, while many a quiet little fellow who minded his own business and took his time when he had to shoot lived on through the old West.

Some of the more discerning historians have recognized three types of Western gunmen. First, the braggart who robbed, murdered, bluffed and lived by the gun. Second, the intermediate type that often served as a peace officer because of bravery and ability with a six-shooter—perhaps not above shooting first at times and ascertaining the facts later, but a more useful citizen than the bad man and highwayman. And, finally, the law-abiding pioneer who carried and used a gun only in the performance of his duty or to protect life and property during the settling of the Western plains and mountains.

Rayner and Linn were the bluffing, bad-man type, willing to shoot in the back without warning. Cahill, Rennick and Earp were certainly within their rights in this case and forced no gun-play.

We of today get most of our impressions of the old West by reading, from the movies and from old yarns handed down by word of mouth. Is it any wonder that we often get a pretty poor picture of the old six-gun days?

A few books and articles, such as Stuart N. Lake's biography of Wyatt Earp and articles by Ed McGivern, Elmer Keith, "Fitz" Fitzgerald, Major Hatcher and a few others, are definite and

accurate, and show an intimate knowledge of the capabilities and limitations of the six-gun. These writers give the old-timers the great credit they deserve without cheapening them with a cloak of questionable glamour and a long list of utterly impossible shooting feats. The same can not be said of many writers of popular fiction, semi-historical books and movie scenarios. And as to word-of-mouth yarns, the average person loves a good story so well that he tries to outdo the one who told the tale to him. Often the true facts are lost in a colorful haze of imagination.

Few people can read one of the good Western novels without keen enjoyment, yet anyone who knows the West realizes that cowboys spend long, lonely months on the range working cattle and not continuously riding into town dressed in fancy trappings worth a couple of years' wages and performing marvelous shooting stunts with a six-shooter. A cowboy's life is far from the exciting round of pleasure and thrills depicted in most Western stories and pictures. These tales are thrilling fables, but not facts.

No doubt, the inimitable O. Henry did not consider himself a firearms expert nor a chronicler of hard fact when he wrote that charming little collection of yarns, *The Heart of the West*. Quite likely he knew, and we all know, that his heroine was exceeding the limits of human performance when she casually put five out of six shots from a six-shooter into a tomato can swinging on a string as she careened by on a wildly galloping horse. Neither is it likely that one of his most amusing characters could daintily and unerringly shoot bottles out of people's hands and weather-vanes from distant houses with a revolver when roaring, staggering drunk. Yet many readers digest such entertaining yarns as history.

Speaking of romantic, dashing Wild West stories, Ned Buntline (E. Z. C. Judson) holds an all-time record for both quantity and thrills per page. Buntline had written dozens of "dime thrillers," so greedily devoured some fifty years ago, and was about exhausted mentally, if not physically, when he heard of the new marshal at Dodge City, Wyatt Earp, who was injecting a little order into the wild and woolly cow country.

Buntline hied himself there in great haste and obtained grist in sufficient quantity to keep his literary mill running night and day. In fact, he felt so obligated to Earp and his deputies that he presented each with a brand new six-shooter. Buntline's imagination was boundless; cowpunchers, buffalo hunters, Indians, soldiers and brave scouts all dashed wildly across his pages. His was the honor of elevating young Bill Cody to "Buffalo Bill" and giving that incomparable showman a boost toward fame and fortune. To little Ned Buntline goes much of the credit for the popular conception of the early West and the miraculous shooting done by its citizens.

One can enjoy well-written fiction without quibbling over details regarding the use of firearms, but it does seem that the authors of historical books and articles might stick a little closer to the facts. The history of the pioneer days of the West has been unmercifully twisted by pseudo-historians who are not only unfamiliar with their subject and with firearms but are sometimes willing to pawn fiction off as fact.

Several years ago there was published an article on the expert shooting of the pioneers, based on a collection of letters written by "Doc" Carver, a famous early-day exhibition shooter. Quoting from this article:

"I have personally witnessed Allin Parmer, an ex-guerrilla under Quantrell, at the age of seventy-five years, take a Colt .44 Navy six-shooter in each hand and, at a distance of twenty feet, place twelve bullets into the muzzle of a twelve-bore gun, a continuous streak of fire emanating from each hand. I have also seen other old guerrillas do this, and there was not one of the 300-odd who could not do the same or better, I am sure.' No man is living today who could approach such shooting, unless it be Dr. Tanner, with the old-style guns, fanning the hammers with the thumbs."

The average gun and ammunition available at that time would hardly do as well from a machine-rest. Such shooting might be possible in deliberate target shooting with the fine guns and cartridges in use now; but remember, this was extremely rapid-fire shooting with old, rather inaccurate guns, firing two guns simul-

taneously, which places the feat outside the realm of possibility. And to think that any one of three hundred men could do as well or better!

A revolver can not be fired fast enough by hand to emanate a continuous streak of fire, or to make the reports blend into one, as is often stated. Furthermore, fanning, when done at all, was done by holding the gun in one hand in the usual way and striking the hammer back repeatedly with the palm or heel of the other hand, thus bringing the hammer sharply to full-cock. If the trigger is removed, held down or tied down, the hammer will not stay cocked, but as the hand continues around with a rapid circular motion to strike the hammer again it falls and fires the shot.

Fanning was rarely done with the thumb. This is more correctly termed "slip-shooting," and is usually done with one hand by a sort of wiping motion of the thumb and is a little slower, enabling the shots to be placed much more accurately. Obviously, fanning two guns at once is impossible.

No man ever approached such a score by fanning. Also, repeated tests with both new and old single-action Colts prove that most guns, unless altered and refitted, will not stand much fanning with fully loaded cartridges, as the cylinder will not align properly when the gun is subjected to such rough handling.

No one familiar with the old single-actions would carry one fully loaded, as the hammer, if snagged, might fall and explode the cartridge and shoot a hole in the wearer's leg. Yet the old guerrilla jerked out two fully loaded guns and fired twelve shots. Modern double-action guns can safely be carried fully loaded, as the action is designed to prevent such an accident, but they can not be fanned, because the cylinder is rotated by the trigger action rather than by the hammer action.

William MacLeod Raine relates an incident in *Famous Sheriffs and Western Outlaws* which is hard to believe, though he has written a lot of interesting books and articles. Emanuel Dubbs ran a road-house near Dodge when that town was at the height of its bloody glory. Dubbs was shooting at tin cans atop fence posts one day. Bill Cody, later to become famous as "Buffalo Bill," rode

upon the scene and watched Dubbs at his shooting practice for a moment and then asked him to toss a couple of cans in the air and see some real shooting. After the cans had been thrown, Cody is supposed to have drawn a pair of single-actions and fired four shots, two from each gun, and to have neatly drilled two holes in each can.

This trick is extremely difficult and has probably never been accomplished under like conditions using single-action guns. It is possible with double-action guns, but very few men can do it, even after thousands of rounds spent in intensive practice.

Ed McGivern of Lewistown, Montana, who has studied and practiced this type of shooting for over twenty years and is probably the greatest rapid-fire and fancy exhibition revolver shot in the world today, mentions this incident in a recent letter to me, saying: ". . . is not true of him or probable at all. I knew Cody, Buffalo Bill, very well, and I also know very well that he couldn't and didn't do the stunt. . . . Buffalo Bill was very ordinary indeed, with any kind of gun, and particularly so with six-guns."

In a conversation with "Happy Jack" Allen, retired United States Marshal at Cheyenne, further light was shed on Buffalo Bill's shooting. Few, if any, men now living have a better right to express an opinion on the shooting and history of the old West. As a boy he rode the cattle ranges of northern Wyoming and later took part in the famous "Hole-in-the-Wall" rustler feud and the bloody "Johnson County cattle war." He has been a cowboy and a peace officer all his life, and now, a white-haired old Westerner, he looks back on the pioneer days, not as legend or history, but as a part of his life.

In regard to Buffalo Bill's shooting, he has intimate knowledge, as he knew Bill on the plains and traveled with his show for several years. He had this to say: "I doubt if Bill ever did that trick. He was a mighty fine fellow and pretty good with a rifle, but not so good with a six-shooter." Happy Jack is no slouch with a six-gun himself and even today can perform all of the rolls, spins, fancy draws, fanning, slip-shooting and so on, but he admits frankly that most of the serious shooting and fighting were done

without flourishes, tricks or fancy gestures and agrees with the facts and opinions of this article.

In *The Trail Drivers of Texas* is described a certain cattle drover who never used the sights on a six-shooter and shot as well from a galloping horse as he did afoot. Possibly so, but it would seem that he must have been only a fair shot on foot if he could do equally as well from the hurricane deck of a wild Texas mustang.

Many of the better pictures and historical books of that period and of recent writing are true to fact, however. In *Historic Sketches of the Cattle Trade of the West and Southwest*, written in 1874, Joseph G. McCoy says, "True, their habits of life and the necessities and exposed nature of their [the cattlemen and cowboys] business render the daily use and carrying of firearms imperative; hence their habitual use of the pistol renders them fair to good shots." Notice that no mention is made of driving nails at a hundred paces or anything of that nature.

Another gun-fight in which plain, straight shooting beat fancy and over-fast gun-handling is the Levy-Harrison fight, which took place in front of the old Dyer House in Cheyenne in 1877. Jim Levy and Charlie Harrison had a misunderstanding in Bowlby's gambling house. As neither was armed, they left with the intention of "getting heeled" and shooting it out on sight.

Harrison was a high-strung sort of fellow, quick to act, of undisputed courage and very fast and tricky with a gun. Levy was equally courageous, pretty fair with a six-shooter in a plain way, but much more deliberate and methodical than Harrison.

Within a short time both were armed and on the war-path. Levy came out of the Dyer House just as Harrison rounded a near-by corner. Harrison shot first and as fast as possible, emptying his gun in a couple of seconds. Levy's first and only shot crashed out in unison with Harrison's last, and Harrison fell mortally wounded. Just a split second's deliberation and the avoiding of any fancy motions insured the deadly accuracy necessary to leave Levy standing the victor with only a scratch.

Whenever one points out that not all of the old-timers were

crack shots or that some yarn is absolutely impossible of performance he is jumped on by those who claim that the pioneers used guns daily and therefore were far better than the shooters of today. However, most were only fair shots, as are most men now. Laying all opinions aside, the old guns had certain definite limitations, and so have the human eyes, nerves and muscles. If a certain feat is just barely within the limits of possibility, perhaps a few men lived who could do it; but when that feat is mechanically or humanly impossible, one can say with finality that it has never been performed.

Even today there are quite a few men who shoot thousands of rounds per year. "Fitz" FitzGerald, tester and technician at the Colt factory, shoots almost daily and has fired approximately three million shots with a revolver. He not only gets as much as or more practice than any old-time gunman, but has better guns and ammunition and more equipment and data to assist him. Fitz is an expert on the quick draw from various positions and rapid-fire defensive shooting, and is probably as good as any of the old-timers and better than most of them. Yet he would be stumped by some of the shots the old Westerners are supposed to have made without effort.

Captain W. H. Sweet, U.S. Army, and Captain James W. Baldwin, U.S. Navy, several years ago fired thousands of rounds and devoted considerable time and thought to a study of hip-shooting. Naturally, they became quite proficient and could shoot from the hip with great speed and fair accuracy, sufficient for close-range defense, but did they attempt to shoot cigars out of people's mouths or do any nail-driving? They did not.

In some particulars, even the wildest fiction is true to fact. Practically every man on the frontier did carry a six-shooter. Many an old cowpuncher would have considered himself "naked" without a "shootin' iron" at his hip.

Gun-fights were quite common in such towns as Dodge, Abilene, Julesburg, Cheyenne, Deadwood and Tombstone during the few years that each was at the zenith of its fame. Many men died "with their boots on," and promiscuous shooting was far from

unheard of. "Shooting up a town" and treeing the marshal and citizens was a pastime that appealed particularly to the cowboy who had been on the range for many lonesome months and was crowding a year's celebrating and fighting into a week in town. Many a chuck wagon went back to the home ranch with the name of some cow town burned into the side with a branding-iron to advertise that the boys had properly "hurrahed" that town.

Occasionally there was a more or less formal duel with six-shooters, or a couple of buffalo hunters stepped off so many paces and shot it out with rifles. It is said that John Ringo challenged "Doc" Holliday to a "handkerchief duel" in Tombstone, each to grasp the corner of a handkerchief and when either let go both were to reach for their guns. The little doctor obliged, but bystanders stepped in and spoiled the show.

Doc was nearly dead with tuberculosis, and Ringo was notoriously morose and despondent; so their lack of interest in life may account for their enjoyment of such pastimes. This formal shooting was rare, however; most fights occurred spontaneously over a card game, some real or fancied insult or over a mining or a cattle deal.

In this fact lies the secret of the old-timer's shooting. It was not accuracy that was needed, but speed. Two men would be talking at a bar or facing each other across a card table. A few hot words, and one would go for his gun. Fancy flourishes did not count; it was necessary to draw and shoot right now to keep from being killed. Considering the range, the target was very large, and fine accuracy was not needed. Sights were unnecessary, and the gun was shot from the hip or instinctively pointed at the adversary and fired as soon as it cleared the holster and swung up in line.

Many men practiced trick draws, rolls, spins, the border shift (tossing a gun from one hand to the other), fanning, slip-shooting and ordinary target shooting just for the fun of it and to become used to the feel of the gun. In a serious fight it was usually draw and shoot from a heavy, open-top holster slung low at the hip and generally tied to the leg with a thong.

It is claimed that the notorious killer, John Wesley Hardin, who killed around forty men while still a young man, used the "Curly Bill," "road-agent" or "Hardin spin." He would offer his gun to an officer butt first, but with a finger in the trigger-guard; then, twirling it around into shooting position, he would catch the other man off his guard. Such tricks were the exception rather than the rule. Most men carried a gun for protection, to shoot crippled cows, coyotes and so on; and when they had to shoot to protect themselves, they just drew and shot as fast and as straight as they could.

During and following the Civil War the old cap-and-ball revolvers were used, but in 1873 the famous Colt Single-Action Army, or Frontier Model, revolver for the .45-caliber metallic cartridge appeared and very shortly became practically the standard all over the West, except in cases where a storekeeper or a gambler carried a little derringer concealed. This beloved old Frontier Model, on which have been hung such endearing names as "Peacemaker," "Equalizer" and "Judge Colt," was a big improvement over existing models and is still made and much in demand. From a purely mechanical standpoint, it is surpassed slightly by modern double-action revolvers made by Colt and Smith & Wesson; but it has a nice grip, can be fired even though many parts are broken and has a great romantic appeal to all six-gun shooters.

Colt brought out a double-action gun in the early '80's, known to collectors as the "Bird's Head Model" because of a slight resemblance of the grip to a bird's head, but it never became as popular as the single-action. Billy the Kid, famous as a hired gunman in the Lincoln County cattle war of New Mexico and all over the Southwest, is supposed to have carried one of these guns for a time before his death. The gun, a .41 caliber, was sold shortly after for \$13.50.

No other period in American history is more colorful or produced any braver men than the days of the old West when millions of longhorn steers came north out of Texas, the railroads pushed through the buffalo-grass, and great mines opened in the

deserts and mountains. No one would desire to rob these pioneers of any glory, but their actual accomplishments merit sufficient praise without having some grizzled old veteran performing some impossible trick that would make him turn over in his grave.

So if you would sift the six-gun facts from the fables, add the proverbial grain of salt to the story of some Alkali Pete "hauling up and throwing down" on his enemy and drilling him between the eyes at a hundred paces or using the butt of his six-shooter as a club in a saloon brawl. Just pause to ponder why he should waste his time "hauling up and throwing down" if someone were shooting at him, why he should take the time to reverse his gun to club someone when he could use the barrel for a club and be ready to shoot, and why he always hit 'em "right between the eyes" or in the heart, though none of the skilled target shots could do as well today.

FOUR MILE GROUSE¹

Grouse were everywhere in that New England cover—and in a year of scarcity!

By BURTON L. SPILLER

THE FOUR MILE PASTURE is a paradise for grouse. It is approximately a mile in width, and its length is indicated by its name. It lies between two mountain ridges which lack but little of achieving a true perpendicular.

In theory, it is a valley, but in effect it is a plateau, for it is high country and except for the towering walls which flank its length would in itself be a mountain-top. It is particularly inaccessible, and for that reason is not well known, but it is one of the best covers I know.

The walls temper the winter winds, and a few dense patches of pine afford added protection. Berries grow profusely in the openings, and thickets of thorn-apples, sumac and barberries furnish additional food. Scattered here and there throughout its length are thrifty young apple trees; close in around the rocky walls stretches a band of big black birches. The buds of these furnish an unfailing food supply in the winter, and they are plentiful enough to feed a thousand grouse.

It was here that Bill and I came, after wandering over something like 175 miles of country in two states, for the insanity which

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afflicts a bird hunter is just a bit different from that which other sportsmen enjoy. He insists that black is white. Even a mediocre salesman could take his order for a slice of green cheese from the moon, but one must be a hypnotist to convince him that there is a scarcity of birds.

"Heck!" he will say. "Look at what we left last fall! Look at the hatching season! We never had a better one! There's birds enough, if we can only find 'em."

He believes it, too, with the simple faith of a zealot, and will not admit his error. Hope springs eternal in his breast, and he goes on, like Tennyson's "Brook," forever.

For the first month of the open season we had hunted the best covers we knew, from morning until night, with a lack of luck which was unprecedented. We found birds, for almost every cover had a few in it, but nowhere were they plentiful enough so that we could conscientiously take more than an occasional one for the benefit of the young dog I was working.

But in the Four Mile Cover we found birds. We had gone through it casually, with two dogs, Bill's camera and only one gun. We covered less than half the territory, and were surprised to learn, when we checked the tally for the day, that we had started twenty-seven grouse.

Now Bill is a true conservationist, and will not take so much as one bird unless he believes there are enough left in the cover for seed, but now he became enthusiastic.

"Twenty-seven!" he said. "And we didn't so much as throw a stone at one of them. Let's give them time to get settled down, and then come back and have one real old-time day."

I agreed. When we returned, after three days, I could see that Bill meant business. Usually he dons a voluminous and many-pocketed coat which he stuffs full of check-cords, shells, spike collars, bells, whistles, lunch, his camera and other impedimenta. Now he pulled on a sleeveless jacket, distributed a box of shells evenly in his pockets, so that no accumulated weight might mar the smoothness of his swing, hung his camera about his neck, snapped his 20-gauge together, and issued a challenge to all the

grouse in the country to come out and attack him, singly or in groups.

It had rained on the previous day, and the dogs, full of pep again after their rest, high-tailed it up through the rocky defile which led to the entrance of the cover. We let them range as they chose, so that they might work off some of their keen edge before we came to the first bit of grouse country.

Two hundred yards up the ravine, on a bit of springy ground, we found Jack frozen in a solid point, with my youngster backing him beautifully. Apparently they had passed the bird before they caught its scent, for they had swung around and were pointing toward the rocky wall, which rose sheer and straight before us. It did not seem possible that any grouse would lie before an obstacle which would so seriously impede its getaway, and I was thinking that it must be a belated woodcock. Suddenly there came a thunder of wings and a pair of brown birds got up simultaneously from the very base of the cliff. One took off down the pass, just clearing the tops of the boulders, while the other zoomed upward, straight up the face of the perpendicular cliff.

The low-flying bird was Bill's; so I swung on the other. No one who has not witnessed it would believe that any bird could attain such speed in an absolutely vertical flight, but this one went up like an arrow from a bow. When I touched the trigger, I saw the shot strike the cliff at least two feet beneath it.

Yanking the gun straight upward, for the bird was now almost directly overhead, I pulled the other trigger. The wings ceased their driving beat, yet so great was its speed that the body hurtled another ten feet higher and seemed to hang there suspended before it started to fall to earth.

I have often found it necessary to dodge a falling duck, but I do not recall another instance when I have seen a ruffed grouse dropping straight toward me from the skies. Standing beside the old dog, I watched the bird fall, plummet-like, toward us. At the last moment I saw that it would miss me by inches, and stood my ground.

Then there came a thud, a sudden startled cough from Jack,

and I looked down to see him shaking his head and spitting out a mouthful of feathers. Standing close beside me, watching the falling bird, he had merely opened his mouth and let the grouse drop into it. I hope I may never forget the moment, or the disgusted look he gave me, as though to say: "Hey, you dumb-bell! Be careful! What kind of a way is that to kill birds?"

He worked the last feather from his tongue, then picked up the bird and carried it over to his master. Bill took it, looked at it glumly for a moment, and tossed it back to me.

"How about yours?" I asked. "Did you get it?"

"No." He prefaced the simple negative with a concise, sharp phrase, but even then it sounded unnecessarily short. "I missed her."

We went on. Bill, I imagine, was thinking his own thoughts, while I was wondering why, after all the years, I still knew so little about grouse and the men who hunt them. Why should the shyest of all birds lie so closely in a place like that? Why would the same bird, in the thickest cover, get up out of gunshot, land in some place where it had no more than a few scanty bushes for protection, and then insist on being kicked before it would fly?

What human weakness is it that makes us so soon forget the making of a clean, snappy double, yet causes the miss of an easy straight-away to rankle for years? And why, oh why, when a fellow determines that for this one day he will show the cock-eyed world something in the way of shooting which it will always remember, must he tighten up until he creaks like a rusty hinge?

We worked through the mile-long length of the defile, and emerged at last into the lower end of the valley. There is a particularly good woodcock cover here—a half-acre patch of alders with a birch knoll behind it—and when Jack swung into the alders and came to a skidding halt, I was sure that this time he had found one of the little russet fellows.

I voiced my opinion to Bill, and he agreed that I was probably right. Then, with a roar of wings and raucous cacklings, three pheasants hammered up through the alders before the dog. Here was something else over which to ponder. Why didn't they ever

give us chances like this during the open season? Where do they all hide when a fellow is really looking for them? Why——

"Watch out!" Bill called sharply. "Another point!"

I swung around to look at the dogs, and as I did so a woodcock bounced into the air before me. Now that the season on them had closed, the birds were thicker than fleas on a dog. Why was that?

"Whoa! Hold everything! He's nailed something else!"

Through the alders I could see Jack pointing stanchly and the pup swinging around at the end of a cast which would bring him well in front of his mate. Fearing that he might bump the bird, I was about to halt him when he slid, with all four feet braced, to a startled halt. He was merely backing, but I felt my heart warm anew toward him, for I knew that the time would come when he would not be content to have another dog do all the finding.

"Another d— pheasant!" Bill said, and he had scarcely uttered it when a bird boiled upward through the branches.

Not until the bird had cleared the tops of the alders and leveled off in its swift flight did either of us realize we had dumbly permitted a grouse to get cleanly away. Neither of us spoke, but we must have been thinking the same thoughts. When, an instant later, another grouse got up from almost the same spot, we each shot at it, and so closely together that the reports sounded as one. Feathers flew, and the bird came down with a dull thud.

"That's Wild West stuff," Bill said. "Shoot first, and talk it over afterward. Did you hit that bird, or did I?"

I knew what was coming next, for it is a joke which he originated and which he practices on someone at least once each year.

"I had a clear chance at her," I answered, and waited happily, for I had seen something which told me that his favorite joke, for once, was going to misfire.

"Well, let's leave it to the dog to decide," he said. "All right, Jack. Fetch! And bring it to the one who killed it. That's fair enough, huh?"

"Perfectly fair," I assured him.

Reaching down, I took the bird from the pup's mouth, and for once could not find the heart to scold him for breaking shot.

The old dog dashed ahead, then turned and came toward me. Holding the bird out invitingly, I waited, thankful because of the alders which obscured Bill's vision. Then I said, "Thank you," in an unnecessarily loud voice and walked over toward Bill, holding the bird in my hand. I smoothed the ruffled feathers, managing by some miracle to keep my face straight as I did so.

"It's surprising," I said, "how much a dog knows."

I have never seen a look of such utter surprise upon a person's face—and if he chances to read this he will be surprised again, for I have never told him the truth of the matter.

Once more we went on and presently came to a tangled growth of birches which were interspersed here and there with apple trees and patches of healthy young pines. It was a place which seldom had failed to produce a bird or two, and as we entered it I felt a pleasurable glow of anticipation. To add to my satisfaction, the pup had settled down to business and was hunting seriously. The day was pleasantly warm, there were two birds in my pocket, and when the pup grew suddenly cautious and then pointed into the tangle before me I would not have exchanged places with a king.

"Point!" I called to Bill, who was plodding along a hundred feet to my right. "The pup has one nailed. Get ahead into the clear, will you? I doubt if I can get a shot in this thicket."

"All right," he answered.

As I waited for him to win through to an open position I watched the pup admiringly. What style! What animation! What rock-like stanchness! Yes, and what a clever guy I had been, too, to reach right into a litter of pups and pick me out a grouse dog! I threw my shoulders back, and felt my hat growing uncomfortably tight around my head.

The pup's gaze, I thought, was centered on a wide-spreading apple tree before him, and as I looked at it I saw a limb tremble slightly. There was not enough wind to cause the movement, and I knew a grouse was feeding there. Then another branch trembled—and another.

"It's a grouse convention!" I thought. "The tree is full of them!"

It was a thrilling moment. The pup was intense, animated, and I could feel my heart pounding against my ribs. I was sorry that Bill was missing it all, and I spoke to him, cautiously.

"I wish you could see this," I said proudly. "He's nailed a whole bunch of birds!"

"Well, kick 'em out, then," he said practically. "What are you waiting for?"

With gun advanced I moved in. The branches still trembled, but there was no sudden thunder of wings. At last I stood beneath the tree, looking up into it. On a sturdy limb a fat old porcupine sat, biting juicy chunks from an apple which it held beneath a forepaw, and above her two youngsters climbed precariously among the smaller branches. I called Bill over, but he was still unimpressed.

"So that's a bird dog, is it?" he asked, glancing back at the pup, still pointing rigidly. "Isn't it wonderful, the things that can be accomplished by scientific breeding?"

I took the pup by the collar and led him away. We worked up the valley, and presently Jack winded game. Cutting across in front of me, he slowed abruptly and slid into a point. Bill came in rapidly, prepared for business, while I detoured around the dog and hastened ahead, hoping to intercept the bird if it got up beyond the range of his gun.

I had made scarcely half the distance I desired when I heard the hammer of wings and the snappy report of the 20-gauge. Instantly the bird broke into view, making heavy weather of it as it tried to keep afloat. A lone pine and a clump of stunted birches barred its path, and into the latter it splashed, and with a tremendous beating of wings managed to secure a footing on a limb, close in beside the trunk.

"That bird was hit, and hit hard," Bill said as he came pushing through the thicket. "I took a handful of feathers out of her, but she managed to keep going."

"You didn't touch her," I lied. "I saw her. She lighted in that birch," and I pointed her out to him.

"She'd never sit there like that if she wasn't hit," he declared

rightly. "See how she's braced against the limb, holding herself up?"

"She's all right," I kidded him. "Why don't you take a pot-shot at her? You might hit her that way."

He told me where to go, and expressed his willingness to accompany me before he would shoot at a sitting bird.

"Well, if you are determined to miss her again, I'll move her for you," I said, and leaning my gun against one of the smaller birches I gave the tree a vigorous shake.

I would have taken almost any bet that the bird would come tumbling down upon me, but I heard the roar of its wings and looked up to see it flash behind the lone pine. It was a hard shot, for the tree hid the bird completely, and Bill missed her cleanly. I marked her course carefully as she planed down through the stunted growth.

Then I picked up my gun and watched Bill with interest. He was walking around in aimless circles, and muttering through set lips.

"You did hit her the first time, and hard, too," I confessed, deciding that I had carried the joke a bit too far. "I marked her down. Let's go after her."

It was the pup that found her, a hundred yards farther on, lying with wings outstretched and as dead as Julius Caesar.

"Five shells, and only one bird!" Bill said as he stowed her away. "That's nice work! I know what the trouble is, though. I've been hurrying too much. I'll take my time on the next one."

He is usually a truthful sort of chap, but on this occasion he failed to keep his word. We crossed a bit of swampy land and came to another birch-covered ridge. Once more the dogs found game, and by their intentness we could tell that the birds were lying close.

We went in, side by side, and were well up to them when a pair of grouse rose simultaneously, rocketing upward, straight-away, toward the tops of the birches. The setup was so perfect that there was no need for haste, and I was swinging leisurely on

the one on my side when Bill's gun barked once—twice—and both birds came tumbling down together, dead.

"That proves it," Bill said soberly. "I knew that I had been hurrying too much. I took my time on that pair."

I don't know why I ever try to razz him, for it always works out thus in the end. I know the reason for that, though. It is the same one which would prevent my stepping into the ring and taking the title away from Joe Louis. He's a better man than I.

A half mile farther on, the pup, going gloriously now, bumped a whole covey of birds. We could hear them getting up, one after another, in heart-warming numbers. Immediately the youngster came in, looking shamefaced for what he had done, even before I scolded him, but he redeemed himself shortly by nailing a single in a tangle of blackberry vines.

Until then, the birds had been lying remarkably well, but this one ran like a turkey. The pup was plainly puzzled, but I urged him on, and he picked up the scent again momentarily. Working with him, trying to make him go ahead confidently and boldly, we succeeded in forcing the grouse into a corner, where it finally decided to lie; but when I put it up, it burst out before Bill's face, and he stood, with his gun under his arm, and let it go, unruffled, upon its way.

"Too easy," he explained when I looked at him questioningly. "I'm not going to carry the limit around all the rest of the day, with nothing to look forward to. I want to enjoy myself."

One by one, the dogs located the scattered birds; but as though Bill's refusal of his chance had brought us bad luck, or perhaps because of the pup's tumultuous descent upon them, they invariably got up well out of range. Leaving them at last, we worked up through the remaining cover without securing a point.

We ate lunch beside a clear, cool spring, rested for a half hour, as a mark of respect for the rugged trail we had trod, then started back down the other side of the valley. Almost at once we began to find birds, but it was unbelievable that they could have so changed their tactics since the morning. The pup was wholly outclassed, and even the older dog seemed to grow slightly be-

wildered at the unvarying sameness of their routine. "Point!" one of us would call, and *whir-r-r-r!* would go a bird, far ahead. A moment later we would see it scaling along up the mountainside, where we could not follow.

"They've learned their lesson," Bill said when, some three hours later, having once more neared the lower end of the valley, we paused to look at each other questioningly. "It didn't take 'em long, either. Well, five birds are enough, anyway. Let's go home."

I agreed. We turned—and there were the dogs before us, side by side, and each stretching out until he looked to be at least ten feet long. The grouse must have been lying almost within tasting distance of them, for when I swung the gun around and took a step forward it boiled up from under their very noses. I cut it down, and at the report we could hear birds thundering up in the woods before us.

"Listen to 'em go!" Bill exclaimed. "Don't that sound like old times?"

It did. It sounded great, for I know of no sweeter music than the booming roar of their startled flight, and I know of nothing which will so quickly set my heart pounding. I love to hunt them. I like to bag a few of them occasionally; but better still, I like to know that, despite drought and flood, disease and pestilence, vermin, automobiles and man, the ruffed grouse still has the power to survive and periodically replenish our woodlands with others of his kind.

I was thinking some such thoughts when the pup came in with the bird. I smoothed the mottled plumage, felt the plump weight of the breast, and looked up to see Bill hurrying off to where a spot of white proclaimed that Jack had found another.

How spitefully a 20-gauge can bark in a wooded valley when the sun has slid down behind the mountains and the wind is stilled! Bill came back with the bird in his hand and a contented look on his face. Who would care to be a millionaire if he could never know that feeling?

Five minutes later, the pup stuck his nose in the air and went to his bird as a grouse dog should. I stole up to him, ran a hand

down his quivering back, then straightened and took another step forward.

It happened as I knew it was bound to do. No day like this could be marred at the last moment. It was foreordained. It was written in the stars. Straight toward the western sky the grouse zoomed, bulking huge and outlined with cameo clearness against the soft crimson. I pressed the trigger, broke the gun, tossed away the empty shell and dropped the other one in my pocket. The pup was standing with lifted head, his ears cocked forward, listening

“All right,” I said. “Go fetch!”

THAT BIG BUFFALO BASS¹

*Ozark Mountain folks know their bass and
how to catch 'em*

By WELDON STONE

ACCORDING to the old saying, "Where there is smoke there is fire"; and likewise, where there are tales of big fish there is bound to be one. That's what I say now, but a week ago I wouldn't have believed it.

My third consecutive summer in the Arkansas Ozarks was about to end, and I was still hearing stories of a big bass that had never been caught. I had first heard of him two years before, when I had only begun to fall in love with the Big Buffalo River, particularly that part of it just above the forks in Newton County, Arkansas. That day I had been working slowly downstream, doing more exploring than fishing, when I came to a spring shaded by a giant chinquapin. I drank my fill, rolled a cigarette, and lay down in the shade to rest.

While I was wondering how many bushels of chinquapins such a tree would bear I heard a squirrel scolding something on the rocky bluff across the river. I spotted the squirrel in a scrubby pine, and then, lower down, I saw a man sitting in a niche of rock. He had a gun held ready, and he was still as the cliff itself.

The only sure sign that the fellow was not dead or sleeping was the peering attitude of his head. He was leaning forward and

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staring into the river below him. Apparently he had not heard the squirrel, though it was only about ten steps above and behind him.

I whistled. The man looked at me, and I pointed to the squirrel. He turned his head toward where I pointed; then he casually lifted his rifle and shot the squirrel. The report of the gun, rebounding from the bluff, was deafening. The squirrel came tumbling down so near the man that he had only to get to his feet to pick it up.

Then he climbed easily up the bluff and entered the thick, scrubby growth of cedar and pine on the top. A few minutes later he appeared on the spring-path and dropped the squirrel at my feet.

"Hit's yourn," he said and, leaning his rifle against the chin-quapin, kneeled down and drank from the spring.

"But you shot it," I protested; "so it's really yours."

"I don't hanker atter squirrel meat," he replied, wiping his mouth with the back of a lean brown hand. His face was like his hand—lean and hard, unsmiling but not unfriendly.

"But why——?"

Then I stopped. I had already learned not to ask too many questions of these mountain folk; and besides, I had noticed that the squirrel's head was completely missing. Glancing at the man's rifle, I saw that it was a .30-30, old but well kept.

I pulled out my sack of tobacco and offered it. He rolled a cigarette and handed it back to me without a word. He stood and smoked in a silence that was embarrassing to me but not, apparently, to him. I couldn't think of anything to say that wasn't a question.

"Well," he said finally, "I reckon I jest as well to git on home," and, picking up his rifle, he was gone before I could thank him for the squirrel.

He had scarcely disappeared when I heard a rustling of leaves behind me and a man stepped out of the undergrowth in back of the spring. He was the same man I had met as a fly-fisherman a few days before, but now there were two revolvers strapped to

his hips. Intuitively I knew he was the game warden. I glanced at the squirrel involuntarily; I knew the season was closed. But the man was grinning.

"That's all right. I seen it all," he said.

"That's lucky for me," I said, "but I really caused him to shoot it. I thought he was hunting squirrels for food."

"No, he wa'n't huntin' nothin' thet lives in trees or wears fur. He was huntin' ol' King Solomon."

"I see," I said, though I didn't at all. A triangle affair possibly, or a mountain feud. I waited while the warden cut a chew from his plug.

"Ol' King Solomon is a bass," he said. "We call him thet because he's so smart nobody can't catch 'im. Thet feller with the gun hooked 'im once, but couldn't hold 'im. Ever since, he's been tryin' off an' on to shoot 'im. Well, thet's agin' the law; an' besides, I'm acquainted with King Solomon myself, an' they ain't nobody a-goin' to shoot 'im if I can help it. I had my hand on 'im once."

"How big was he?" I couldn't keep from asking that one.

"I don't choose fer strangers to think I'm a-lyin'," he said, "even when I'm a-tellin' the truth."

And that was all I could get out of him about the size of King Solomon, but that was enough. I determined then and there to keep a sharp lookout for this monarch of Big Buffalo bass.

"Where does King Solomon hold court most of the time?" I asked with a studied effort to be casual.

"Up an' down," he replied; "first one hole, than tother."

"It seems that our friend with the gun expects to find him in this hole. Has he ever been seen here?"

"Once. 'Bout a year ago. Might be a mile or two up or down by now. Bass is like folks: they travel some when the vittles is scarce. Well, I reckon I jest as well to get on back to town. See ye agin."

"I'll look out for you," I said. And I would look out for him, especially when he had his fly rod along. King Solomon would likely be not very far away.

All of this took place two years ago, during my first summer in the Ozarks. I did see the warden several times after that; and when I saw him, I usually saw the man with the gun. The game they played is a popular one with boys and girls; it's called tag. The man with the gun was trying to tag King Solomon; the warden was bent on tagging the man with the gun. I liked to see them at their game, for as long as they played it I knew the big bass had not been caught.

The rest of that summer and all during the next two summers I looked for King Solomon and mentioned his name to all the natives I chanced to meet. They all knew of him, and most of them had stories to tell about the time they had seen him or hooked him; but no one was able or willing to tell me just where and when he might be found. So I never met King Solomon till quite recently, and then it was through Dee Thompson, a boy of twelve.

The few times I tried to talk with Dee it seemed that he was little different from the many lean and taciturn boys of all ages whom I came across on Big Buffalo River. All were hard to talk to; few seemed to have any interest in fishing. I probably never would have got to know Dee any better than the others if I had not mentioned old King Solomon. He was a different boy then.

"Hev ye seen 'im?" he asked.

"No, I haven't seen him—just heard about him. But I guess you have," I suggested.

"I seen a big bass one day," he answered, and that was as far as I got with him then.

Another time, however, when Dee saw me with a good day's catch, he opened up and told me about the time King Solomon had broken his line after he had lifted him out of the water by the line. Dee is a tough, hickory-fibered boy, pure mountain stock, a natural stoic; yet it seemed to me that his voice quavered a bit just there, and I remember that his head was turned away.

"But I'm a-goin' to git 'im some day," he added. "It won't be with one o' them fine pretty-things like yourn, but I'm a-goin' to ketch 'im. I know somethin' thet'll git 'im."

I knew it would be futile as well as ill-mannered to ask Dee just what bait he intended to use in bringing about King Solomon's downfall, but I thought he might tell me when he hoped to accomplish it.

"Hit won't be long," he told me. "When the signs is right agin."

"When do you reckon that will be?" I asked, and then wished I hadn't. Dee was looking me too steadily in the eye.

"Do ye want to go with me?" he asked.

"I sure do. You know I've spent a lot of time looking for King Solomon, and even if I can't catch him I'd like to see him—just so I can tell the folks back in Texas how big these Ozark bass really get to be."

"I'll let ye know when I'm a-goin' atter 'im agin," Dee promised and left me to wonder when that would be.

Three or four days later, while I was having a second cup of coffee and trying to decide whether to go up- or downstream that day or to try Little Buffalo for a change, Dee walked into my camp.

"I'm a-goin'," he announced.

"And may I trail along?" I asked, too hopefully, I feared.

"Thet's whut I said tother day," he replied.

In five minutes we were on our way, downstream. I hurried after the tough bare feet ahead of me over sharp rocks that made me cringe in spite of my thick rubber soles. Dee led me straight to the hole by the chinquapin spring, where just two years before I had first heard of King Solomon from the game warden. We had a good drink of water, and I rolled a cigarette.

Dee took from his pocket a ball of stout cotton cord and tied the free end to the middle of the twelve-foot cane pole he had brought with him. He measured off twice the length of his pole and cut the cord. Then he bent to the line a three-foot piece of copper wire and to that a new bronzed "catfish hook" of a murderous size.

"I'm about ready," he said.

"Go to it, boy," I said. "I hope you get him."

"Ain't ye a-goin' to fish any?" he asked.

"No," I answered, but not very firmly, "King Solomon is your fish. I'll watch. I just want to see him."

"I can show 'im to ye if ye'll climb the bluff."

He looked across the river. The sun was just topping the ridge.

"Hit's the right time," he said.

With Dee leading, we crossed below the spring and followed a goat trail up to a ledge of the bluff. There we sat down. The river was about ten feet below us. It was still and shaded by the ridge behind us—all but a narrow strip along the opposite bank.

"Do ye see thet there sycamore log, catty-cornered down the crick?" Dee asked, pointing toward the sunny strip of water.

"Yes, I caught a good one there last summer," I replied. I had tried it many times since without a single strike.

"Thet's where King Solomon lives," Dee said. "He stays under thet old log, an' he won't let no other bass come around it. I seen 'im drive 'em away. Watch."

Dee broke off a piece of limestone the size of a dime and thumbed it into the middle of the narrow stream. I wasn't prepared for what happened. An underlying limb detached itself from the log and shot like a torpedo to the spot where the piece of rock had struck the water. There it stopped dead-still a couple of feet beneath the surface. I saw fins parrying, a bulldog jaw champing, and two bulging eyes glaring upward at the widening ripples above them. At last I was looking upon King Solomon in all of his glory!

"Thet's him," Dee said quietly—and that's the only time I ever knew Dee to waste a word.

"I believe you, Dee," I said reverently.

Then he looked at me with the same expression that I had seen on his face when he asked me if I wanted to come with him to meet King Solomon.

"Do ye want to try fer 'im with one o' yer fine pretty-things?" he asked.

"Do I?" I almost shouted. "No, Dee. No. Of course not. I'd

rather just watch. You go ahead. Go ahead, Dee. But where's your bait? What are you going to use for bait?"

"Hit's in a good place. But you go ahead and try 'im. I ain't in no hurry."

I did try him. But I was in a hurry. Afraid of casting over him, I thumbed the reel, and the plug fell short by several feet of my intended mark. King Solomon rose slowly till he was only a few inches below the surface. There he stood, champing his jaws like a bulldog waiting in the pit for somebody's pet poodle.

I retrieved in a sweat and cast again in a frenzy of anxiety. This time I did overcast him, and only by a hasty side-swipe of the rod was I able to keep the line from settling down on his back. I reeled in slowly, then fast, playing the lure with all the artistry I knew. King Solomon watched it pass a foot from his nose. His only show of interest was to pivot slowly as the plug came home, following it only with his eye.

Shaking with bass-ague, I tried again, this time miraculously placing the lure where I aimed it—three feet to the rear of King Solomon. Action exploded. King Solomon had turned and struck with a fury and speed that made him invisible, but I saw my plug. It shot upward out of the water and then dropped back with a listless splash and a slack line.

Then, as the froth cleared from the water, I saw King Solomon. He was slowly heading for his sycamore log. I sat on the ledge as limp as my line and looked at the spot where I had seen his broad tail wave me farewell.

Just then I heard Dee walking away, down the trail that led to the crossing. I felt pretty sick. I reeled in and stood up to go back to camp, back home, back to Texas where a bungler like me belonged, where there was more room to bungle in and fewer folks per square mile to know about it.

As I started down I met Dee coming up the trail. He had something dangling from his hook—something so monstrous that I failed, at the first glance, to recognize it. The thing was a crawfish—a rough, gnarled, clawing, red crawfish with pincers that might have dared a lobster to a pinch-as-pinch-can combat.

Dee had run the hook through the third joint of the crawfish's tail. I looked at it incredulously and then at Dee.

"That's a craw-dad," he stated. "I got five more in a live-box at the end of the hole. Watch."

Between the thumb and middle finger of his left hand, which also held the pole, Dee coiled a part of his line; then, whirling in his right hand the lobster-sized crawfish, he let it fly. The crawfish dropped like a horseshoe beside the sunken sycamore log, at the particular spot where King Solomon had given me the Shanghai gesture.

Upon striking the water, the crawfish began gyrating in crazy downward spirals, instinctively tailing for dark water, a hiding place under a rock, a ledge, a log—any sanctuary away from deep, open water. He disappeared in the dark shadow under the log.

Dee jerked his line sharply twice, and then let it go slack again. Suddenly there was a jerk from the other end of the line and several feet of it were snaked under the log as he lowered the tip of his pole.

"Hook 'im! Hook 'im!" I yelled.

But Dee waited. The line twitched, and Dee struck. The long cane pole bent; and though Dee had both hands on it, with the butt of it braced in his groin, the tip jerked down and pointed to the darkness under the log. There were three savage lunges that I thought would tear the pole from the boy's hands or strip the line from it; then King Solomon came out to fight in the open.

He broke water first midway of the stream, and as he did so he shot the crawfish out of his jaws so savagely that it was forced up the copper wire to the line. But the hook held, and King Solomon felt it as he burrowed deep to the bed of the river; up he came again, shaking his head and shooting his jaw. We could see that the hook had gone through the toughest part of his lower lip.

Giving up his surface tactics, he went down again to stay, not under the log this time, but under the ledge directly beneath us. Dee tried to pull him out. The stout cane pole bent perilously, cracked, then splintered and broke a third of its length below the

tip. But the line was tied below the break; so King Solomon was still fast, though far from landed. I didn't believe he could be landed from where we were—on a ledge ten feet above the water. But Dee had his own idea about it.

"You jest hold this yere pole a spell," he said.

Slipping off his overalls and shirt, he dived in. He came up, caught hold of the line, and dived again. I could tell by the jerking of the line that he was following it under the ledge. He was gone a long time, so long that I caught myself holding my breath; then the line went slack, and he popped up. He was paddling with his right hand and holding on to the line with his left. I knew by the way his left arm was darting about that he still had King Solomon.

"Jest drop the pole in," he spluttered. "I'm a-goin' to swim across with 'im."

Dubiously I obeyed. The boy swam on his side with a strong scissors kick. Occasionally I could see a flash of white beside him. That was King Solomon showing his belly—all tired out.

Barring a last-minute accident, I knew that Dee had won—and he did win. I watched him scramble up the shallow bank, with his fingers through King Solomon's gill-flap, and go to the spring, where he deposited his catch and threw himself down for a well-earned rest. I picked up my rod and Dee's clothes, followed the trail down from the ledge to the rocky riffle, and crossed over to him.

This took several minutes, but he was still breathing hard when I came up. He was lying on his side, with his head propped up on one hand, while he stared in the spring pool. There was King Solomon, also lying on his side and breathing hard but regularly. He was beaten so far as the score was concerned, but not by any means in spirit. He glared at us out of one amber-rimmed defiant eye.

"Well," I remarked inanely, "you caught him."

"I reckon I did," Dee said, "but I wouldn't hev if you hadn't made 'im hungry with thet there fine pretty-thing o' yourn."

I looked at the boy closely, but could detect not the slightest

hint of a smile on his face. He was watching King Solomon again. The big fish was now upright, fanning water and champing his jaw.

Just then I heard a rustling sound behind me. Turning, I saw the warden with his two guns strapped to his hips.

"Thet fine pretty-thing didn't have nary a thing to do with it," he stated definitely. "I seen it all," and the warden went down on his hands and knees to inspect King Solomon closely.

"Thet's him," he said. "There's the scar on his upper lip where I hooked 'im. Thet's him, all right. How much do ye reckon he'll weigh?"

"I wouldn't want an old friend to think I was lying," I told him, "even if I was telling the truth."

He looked at me sharply, and then grinned.

"No," he said, pulling out his plug of chewing, "I don't reckon ye would, no more'n me."

"He's got another scar, too," Dee said. "Look at his shoulder."

I leaned over the spring pool. There was a deep livid furrow down the side of King Solomon's right shoulder. I looked at the warden.

"What do you think might have caused that?" I asked.

"I wouldn't want an old friend to think I was lyin'," he said, and looked across the river to the bluff.

I followed the direction of his glance. There, in the niche of rock below the scrubby pine where I had seen the squirrel, and just one ledge above that one from which Dee had hooked King Solomon, sat the man with the gun.

"I wouldn't," I said.

"Well," said the warden, "I reckon I jest as well to git on back to town. Better watch ol' Solomon, boy. Ye may lose him yet."

With that parting advice the warden went back the way he had come.

"I guess I'm ready to call it a day, too," I said.

"I'm willin'," Dee said. "You can go on ahead. I'll ketch ye."

Presuming that he wanted to salvage his line and the remains

of his pole, I followed his suggestion and started back to camp. A few minutes later I heard him running along the trail behind me. Turning to wait for him, I saw that his hands were empty. So—the warden had spoken a prophecy. King Solomon, wily King Solomon, had, after all, got away.

But the boy's face was serene—not the face of a boy who had just lost the biggest fish he ever saw. If Dee had ever smiled, he would have been smiling then. I supposed I would have to resort to cross-examination to get the truth—and I might fail to get it all then. But I got far more than I expected.

"Where's King Solomon?"

"Back yanner under thet ol' sycamore log," he answered.

"You staked him out? Won't somebody find him?" I wondered.

"'Twouldn't do 'em no good. I turned 'im loose."

Here was something I had hardly dared to hope for. Here was a boy of twelve—a mountain boy—who had done the thing I had wished I might have the courage to do if I ever caught King Solomon. Then I thought of the man on the ledge with the gun. He must have seen the boy put the fish back. I remembered his deadly aim, how casually he had blown off the head of that squirrel.

"But he'll get killed. That man on the bluff will shoot him," I groaned.

"Won't neither," Dee said. "Since I worked on the sights o' thet gun tother day Pa couldn't hit a hawg with it."

Well, friends, when summer comes again, you'll find me, if you care to find me, in the Arkansas Ozarks, in Newton County, somewhere around the forks of the Buffalo River. And my fishing companion will, I hope, be a mountain boy of thirteen who never smiles and seldom—very seldom—wastes a spoken word.

MAINE¹

By HAROLD TITUS

AMONG all the states east of the Rockies, Maine is unique as far as opportunities for outdoorsmen are concerned. It's one of the old, old states. Americans lived there and had started to exploit its resources long before the first covered wagons pushed across the Alleghenies to unlock the door to those riches resting in the valleys of our great rivers. And yet today a full two-fifths of its area remains wilderness, as open to camper, hunter and fisherman as it was when the first colonists shoved into the mouths of its many rivers and set about determining what lay beyond the ramparts of the timbered hills fronting the Atlantic.

No need for publicly owned land so that the guns may have a place to go in this state. Wild country abounds.

"Of our twenty million acres, probably less than a thousand are posted by their owners against hunting," says George J. Stobie, Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Game, and he must have a great sense of well-being when he makes such a statement, because the problem of places to go to try individual luck is the one that plagues four out of five fish and game administrators until their nights are restless.

What goes for the hunters, of course, goes for fishermen, hikers and all others seeking the benefits of life in the open. Add to this vast area, legally open to the licensed sportsman and vacationist,

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the attitude of Maine people, and you have something to marvel at! The very fact that so small an acreage is forbidden to the sportsmen indicates a point of view that is rare. Statistics are not available to cover the point, but it is a safe assumption that in Maine fewer "No Trespass" signs are in evidence than in any other state in the East, if not in the whole nation.

Perhaps one explanation of this is the fact that Maine is a pioneer among tourist states, although when outsiders first commenced joining the natives in pursuit of fish and game they were not called tourists, nor was such an enterprise as the tourist industry recognized. Long after other New England and mid-Atlantic states had found their supplies of big game depleted, moose and deer were abundant in the Maine forests. Long after streams to the west and south had ceased to yield satisfactorily, Maine rivers and lakes retained their populations of trout and salmon. And men and boys and an occasional woman from areas too highly developed or exploited began journeying there, starting a flood-tide that has risen with the years.

Down East folks are accustomed to visiting anglers and gunners. They can't remember when they didn't have them around. For well over half a century the transporting and guiding and housing and feeding of sportsmen has been a recognized occupation, and Maine is good at it. Add to this a fish- and game-conscious public on the ground, and the job of the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Game is one of proportions!

Somehow there hasn't been much noise made about Maine when discussions of conservation activities have been rampant. Some of its projects have received richly deserved publicity, of course; but by and large, what goes on in other localities has held the spotlight when the big bull sessions got under way. Perhaps this is largely due to the Maine manner of administering its resources. The Department of Inland Fisheries and Game is concerned with just those items. It doesn't go in for big-scale publicity. Another public bureau, the Maine Development Commission, and a private organization, the Maine Publicity Bureau, are dedicated to the job of luring the visitors in and telling what

they may expect to encounter on arrival. Forests and parks are also outside the province of the Department. So all it is expected to do is saw wood on the task of keeping forests, lakes and streams populated with the life forms which man wants. This it does, brother, as we shall now attempt to set forth.

This Pine Tree State has a unique conservation setup. The Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Game is head man with a vengeance. He is appointed by the governor for a three-year term. His deputy is, by law, of his choosing. Provision is made for an Advisory Council of seven members, but its function is just that: to render to the Commissioner "information and advice concerning the administration of the Department." It is required to meet only twice yearly. The personnel of the Department is selected from civil-service eligibility lists, formulated after examinations given by the Department itself. Political considerations have been out these many years.

Now take a look at the map and try to understand what sort of area this one-man outfit manages. The southern counties are, of course, in a reasonable state of high development throughout, and some of the area has reached the intensive stage. But in that big, blunt wedge which Maine drives between Quebec and New Brunswick unorganized land predominates, and in the northern portions of Somerset, Piscataquis and the western part of Aroostook Counties contiguous townships by the score have not enough population to set up local governmental units.

It's a land of many lakes, large and small, and of mighty rivers which catch the flow of countless tributaries, all natural trout water. The famous Atlantic salmon streams are confined principally to the eastern part of the state, particularly to the Penobscot, Narraguagus, Pleasant, Machias and Denny's Rivers. Landlocked salmon lakes are spread all over the place from Sebago Lake—a normal half hour's drive from Portland—west and east and north. Bass, pickerel and perch water is well concentrated in lakes in the southern or agricultural areas.

Deer territory is widely distributed with populations increasing, naturally, as you move north and eastward out of the regions of

more intensive land utilization. Grouse normally occur with the deer. Woodcock and ducks and geese are all over the place in good years.

That will give you an idea of how Maine zones itself into habitats for various wildlife forms, so that a part of the territory to be covered in phases of management is so remote that the airplane is a routine method of transportation for wardens and other employes (the Department operates three planes summer and winter). The distribution of many species is so definitely patterned that protection and production efforts may easily be localized. This, together with the tightly knit composition of the agency responsible for keeping stocks of wildlife up, makes for efficiency.

When you start discussing conservation administration in Maine, you won't get very far before somebody swings your attention to the program of biological surveys on which the Department is basing its fish-management procedure. Launched in 1937, these surveys have proceeded year by year and section by section. The studies began in the southwestern portion of the state, where population and pressure are heaviest, and have proceeded east and northward. Although the more remote wilderness areas are likely to get the play when tales of last summer's vacation are in order, and although those same far places are well supplied with accommodations for visiting fishermen and are in general accessible either by highway or railroad—a few hours either by foot or canoe from the last parking place or station will stop no true angler—it was water in the lower counties which was taking the pounding and where the job of maintaining fish supplies, particularly in lakes and ponds, presented the toughest problems.

Now, the landlocked and chinook salmon have for decades made Main fishing distinctive. These species have done better and over a wider range of lakes here than in any other Eastern state. Brook, brown, rainbow and togue, or lake trout, which thrive in hundreds of the state's lakes and ponds, all attract many non-resident anglers.

Keeping up supplies has been a chore, naturally. The usual

procedure was followed. Starting twelve years ago, the hatchery and rearing-station program was expanded from eleven to thirty-four establishments, all devoted to salmonoid fishes, but long before production reached its peak the Department realized that returns weren't justifying investment. In consequence, the biologists were called in and the Department began to lean heavily on technicians at the University of Maine for guidance in its stocking schedules.

When these researchers got into the field, they began to discover things in a hurry. They learned that millions of salmon and trout had been planted in lakes where food and forage conditions wouldn't give them a chance; that in some instances where the more desirable species would grow nicely if planted there were no opportunities whatever for natural reproduction; that in many lakes plantings had been too heavy for the carrying capacities, and that in others, particularly the warm-water lakes, populations had become so dense that stunting of the fish adapted to such conditions was marked.

Recommendations are made for the management of each piece of water studied. If the biologists say that this or that lake is not suitable for salmon or trout no more salmon or trout are planted, despite the fact that local pride may be hurt and local hopes blasted. If the findings show that plantings have been heavier than the carrying capacities warrant, then plantings are cut down. If a lake is in hopeless condition due to overpopulation and poisoning is feasible, then poisoning is ordered, the fish life completely eradicated, and a new start of a restricted association of species made by hatchery introductions.

As a result of this policy, some lakes which were reputed to be salmon or trout water are being taken off such lists, and procedure of that sort anywhere provokes a certain amount of temporary discontent. But the Department has been hewing to the line, apparently taking the common-sense attitude that it is far better to give the customers fish instead of empty gestures; so while the list of salmonoid lakes and ponds, particularly in the southern counties, has been shrinking to some extent, that type of fishing

has been on the upgrade. Furthermore, the setting aside of warm-water lakes for warm-water species, only, is having an effect. Where the salmonoids couldn't make a go of it and where bass can, recent years have seen stocking of both large-mouth and small-mouth bass, which species had, in the past, not been given consideration in the hatchery program.

In 1940 the Kendall Foundation was established to underwrite studies of the Atlantic salmon in the Denny's River. Any work with migrants is a long drag, naturally; but early results have been so encouraging that the work has been extended to the Penobscot and other streams, and the future of fishing for this species looks better.

Now, when we get around to the hunting in Maine, a lot of folks are going to think moose first of all. This is because years ago the state produced many and many a prized trophy. But moose hunting is out of the picture in Maine today for an indefinite period.

"There is no prospect of reopening the season on these animals," says Commissioner Stobie.

He adds, however, that the moose population is on the increase, and one Pittman-Robertson project has had moose habitat as its object of investigation; so it may be that the time will come when bulls will again be legal targets.

Why this once great herd slipped down to so few is not explained. Over-hunting and disease are the common guesses. Prior to 1889 there was no bag limit, nor were cows given protection. In that year, however, hunters were restricted to one bull, and the shortening of seasons and the closing of large areas began. In 1935 the season lasted three days—and that in only three counties—and a total of forty-nine bulls were taken. That ended moose hunting. It is estimated that today Maine has between 2,000 and 2,200 moose, which is, of course, a nucleus for a big herd if protection and other measures can keep them happy and productive.

The deer picture is wholly different, however. In the last decade the whitetails have increased from a thin to good population

until, in places and at times, there are altogether too many for the available food. A month-long season on bucks apparently is not holding the herd in balance in some areas. The low kill of the last ten years was in 1934, when 13,284 bucks were killed. In 1942, 22,591 were checked in. When such an increase is chalked up in such a short period of time, and if the experience of other states is any criterion, Maine is going to need even more hunter help in harvesting the surplus. These figures, by the way, are as accurate as you'll find, because under the state law it is mandatory that deer be presented at checking stations which the Department sets up in all sections.

The black bear is also an important game animal here. In years when mast is plentiful, up to 1,000 are taken.

Except for the introduction of ringnecked pheasants, Maine has done a minimum of work with exotics. The pheasant has taken a fair hold in certain farming districts and supplies local needs, but the ruffed grouse is native, has wide distribution and appears to be doing well, although statistical information is today lacking. Departmental plans include regulations which will require reports of small game kills.

The importance of such records was impressed on Maine folks when, under the Pittman-Robertson Act, they began a comprehensive study of their waters to determine carrying capacities for water-fowl and fur-bearers. It was recognized, of course, that black ducks nested locally in numbers, in common with other Northeastern areas. But the number of nesting ringnecks turned up by the survey was astonishing. This project was only weeks old when it was decided that the extent of duck breeding within the state was sufficient to justify, if not demand, another which would expand the nesting and feeding facilities. So forthwith another project, involving double the expenditure, was launched under which water-levels were equalized by structural improvements and the planting of aquatic food and cover plants undertaken in a big way.

Maine has gone as all out on game research as it has on fisheries studies. To centralize this work as far as possible, Swan Island—

1,500 acres in extent, and lying at the head of Merrymeeting Bay—was purchased and turned into an outdoor laboratory in which all local foods for native wildlife might be studied. A constant study of stomach contents of birds and mammals is carried on, and large nurseries are in process of establishment to raise planting stock of the desired species, to be distributed as needed.

Because of extensive damage done to farm crops in this vicinity by migrating flocks of geese, 100 acres of the island are planted to winter grains to attract the estimated 50,000 honkers that use the route. That's enough commentary on seasonal goose populations!

All this long-range planning in both fish and game affairs got under way none too soon. Until the war curtailed it, the Maine highway program had been expanding, and this work includes trail as well as road building and the creation of camping sites. Post-war plans call for all manner of public works, and it is to be expected that easier access to remote areas will put more folks into the woods and add that much more pressure on supplies of wildlife.

You can't stop talking about Maine without mention of the guide system. Guides are licensed from the Commissioner's office, and although the Department does not function as an employment bureau (most sportsmen hire guides through the management of the camp they patronize) local lists of them are available. These men are given examinations before their licenses are issued. They must be physically, morally and mentally fit to take their parties in and get them out in good shape.

This calls for keen woodcraft, of course, because travel in the Maine woods is wilderness travel, a lot of it by trail and canoe. But it means more than competence in shepherding tourists, too. It means that even in a war summer like this, 900 dependable guardians of the out-of-doors, who have respect for fish and game regulations, eyes to see and understanding with which to report conditions, and an appreciation of the danger of fire, are in the forest to augment the force of nearly one hundred guardians of the wild who are on the Department's payroll.

OUR MOST MYSTERIOUS GAME BIRD¹

By GENERAL WILLIAM MITCHELL

AS THE DAYS grow shorter and the leaves begin to show a waning of their summer vigor the most secretive and mysterious member of our game-bird fraternity begins wending his way south. So poor of flight is he that when he jumps into the air he often looks like a cripple. His legs hang down, his wings flap slowly, and he goes only a few yards before flinging himself into the tall reeds of the marsh. But the sora rail nests around the Hudson Bay country, almost up to the arctic circle, and flies clear to Central America and the northern part of South America.

With his slow and halting flight, it is necessary for the sora to know beforehand whether or not he will have favorable winds to carry him along. His inner ear, which acts as a barometer, gives him this information. His migrations are confined entirely to the night-time, principally in the hours after midnight when the atmospheric conditions are the best and evenest. From about two o'clock in the morning, when the light ions have all disappeared from the air, until daylight, the most tranquil conditions for flight prevail. At this time also the radio has less static and atmospheric interference.

This is the time chosen by the rail bird to make his long migrations. His stopping places are the fresh-water marshes at the heads

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of the tidal streams, where the wild oats, butter weed and cattails grow. One day a marsh will be quiet, with only the advance-guard of blackbirds and "reedies" present, but the next day, at dawn, the notes of the sora rail will resound from every nook and cranny of it.

Except when flushed, the soras are seldom seen, unless the tide raises them above their weedy habitat, or they run out on the mud in pursuit of an insect or while playing with each other. They arrive thin from their long voyage from the North; "thin as a rail" has always been a byword. Nature has made their bodies narrow, so that they can rush quickly through their weedy coverts. Their legs are long and strong. They will always resort to running rather than flying. In fact, some of the rail family have almost lost the power of flight.

Their nests in the North are filled with eggs, from ten to fifteen being the normal number, and on their southern migration they bring with them their year's progeny. Although their flight is not rapid and they are comparatively easy targets, still there is a wonderful fascination about shooting them which the old sportsmen never cease to enjoy.

When the tides make in big on the marshes, sportsmen go to their favorite haunts and pick up their old pusher and his boat. The boats are about 12 feet long, double-enders and slightly rocked on the bottom, so that they will go over the weeds easily. There is a little platform on the stern, on which the pusher stands. He uses a 14-foot pole with a claw on the end to engage on the bottom. With this he can make the boat literally walk over a couple of inches of water. The gunner stands with his legs astride the thwart, near the bow.

As the pusher shoves his boat through the heavy weeds on a rising tide the rail usually jump singly. The pusher calls "Mark!" when a bird flushes. Sometimes one will jump to the right, sometimes to the left, and he calls "Mark right!" or "Mark left!" to indicate in what direction the bird has gone. On very high tides, several may jump at the same time. I have sometimes shot seven or eight before any were picked up.

The little reed skiffs are narrow, and a misplacement of the gunner will turn them over easily. Many is the time I have seen one of my friends shoot toward the side of the boat, lose his balance, turn it over and fall headlong into the marshy ooze.

While the tide is rising, the sora jump out of the grass readily, but the minute it begins to fall it is with the greatest difficulty that they are made to fly. Being semi-nocturnal in their habits, they leave the shelter of the high weeds on the approach of darkness; and if the tide is high at that time, they fly across to the low marshes with little fear. At such times, one poles along the heavy weeds on the edge of the marsh. Occasionally I have killed great numbers within a few minutes in this way. Likewise, at the break of day, they jump from the low marshes and fly to the high marshes. It is all over so quickly, and then everything is so quiet and apparently lifeless, that it is hard to believe that the whole marsh is filled with these little creatures.

Their appearance and disappearance are so sudden and unheralded, so shrouded in secrecy, that many people—and intelligent people at that—believe that they disappear into the mud and live with the crawfishes until the next season approaches. I had a great argument last year with the commonwealth attorney of one of our Virginia counties on this subject. Indians and negroes who have lived their lives along the sora marshes have told me with the utmost seriousness that when a frost comes in the autumn the sora disappear into the mud and do not come up again until the long days of summer have warmed up the bottoms.

In the old days, men hunted them at night. They took canisters of fire in their small boats and used paddles to hit the birds. The feeding multitudes of rail were killed by the score.

The sora tarry to feed in one marsh after another on their southern hegira until they have fattened up. Then, when their barometric ears tell them that a north wind is coming, they hop to the next marsh in the dark of the night. Anyone who happens to be out there will hear them dropping into their weedy resorts. Their migration toward the South, in the late summer and autumn, is much slower than the spring migration North, because

they have their young ones with them going South. They appear to be in no hurry as long as the weather stays warm. As they get stronger, their power of flight increases. They have been known to fly clear across the Gulf of Mexico, and stray ones have been picked up by ships several hundred miles at sea. In the spring, however, they seem in great haste to get to their nesting places, and their stops en route are few and far between.

When the sora is fat, he is a wonderful morsel for the table. There is no suggestion of fishiness or other unappetizing taste about him. He can be eaten, bones and all, without ill effects. With him is found the Virginia rail, although not in such great numbers. This bird is not much bigger than the sora and is somewhat the same color, although more reddish and equipped with a longer bill. It is equally as good to eat as the sora.

Occasionally on the fresh-water marshes one meets the king rail, that wonderful big red bird known to most sportsmen as the marsh hen. It is as big as a young chicken and is very good to eat. These birds are so secretive in their habits that comparatively little is known about them. A salt-water representative of the rail is the clapper, a bird as big as a bantam chicken. When I was a boy, I killed these by the hundreds on the New Jersey marshes.

The companions of the rail birds in their migrations are the red-winged blackbirds, the rusty blackbirds and the reed birds, with a sprinkling of cow birds, purple and bronze grackles and nowadays a few starlings. These appear to eat the seeds of the oats and other marsh plants to a greater extent than the sora, which seem to me to subsist more on insect food.

The "reedie," spink-spanking his way to the South, is the gay bobolink of the North, but he has changed his clothing to a somber hue. These little birds fly from the Northern Hemisphere through Central and South America to the Argentine, where they winter, and then they make the whole trip back for the purpose of nesting in the North Temperate Zone. They become as fat as butter on the wild oats and seeds of our middle-state marshes and are a terrible scourge to the rice fields of Georgia and the Carolinas, which they strike just as the grain is becoming ripe. Thou-

sands of dollars used to be lost in one day from the enormous flocks of "rice birds," as they are called there. When they reach the West Indies, fat from the rice fields of our southern states, they are called "butter birds." In times past, people have been encouraged to kill them, but they are now protected by Federal law.

Of late years, when hunting rail, I have used a 36-gauge or a .410 shotgun with an open right barrel and a full choke left, with No. 10 shot. I kill about as many with this as with a 12-gauge shotgun. With a .410, one can fire an enormous number of rounds without suffering any inconvenience. I have three favorite marsh guns—a .410, a 32-gauge and a 28. No 32-gauge gun is made in the United States, but cartridges can be obtained for this size from the leading manufacturers, who make them for export to Europe. The 28-gauge is an all-round field gun. I use it on the marsh in the evening, when the rail are flying across me from the high marsh to the low marsh, or in the very early morning, when they are trading back from the low marsh to the high marsh. It gives a thicker train of shot than the smaller guns.

When a rail bird is shot, its exact position—even the blade of grass that it has fallen on—must be noted. If it has the least spark of life, it will dive beneath the surface. This perhaps accounts for the legend that sora can live under water as well as above it. Of course, this is not so, as they will drown in a few minutes. However, they are experts at remaining under water and just sticking their bill above it, coming up under a blade of grass or a leaf, with the rest of the body under water, where they remain hidden but are able to breathe. I have seen them run under the water almost as fast as they run on top of it.

Their color is so similar to that of the marsh grasses that it takes an expert to find them, even when they are stone-dead among the weeds. They can conceal themselves in an almost barren space where one would think it impossible for a fly to be hidden.

In the autumn the marshes, with their wild oats and vegetable, insect and piscatorial life, are full of feathered denizens: marsh

wrens and sparrows, warblers without number in their migrations, kingfishers, bitterns and herons, woodcock and snipe, plover and doves; while in the September morns blue- and green-winged teal, sprigtails and mallard ducks drop in from their northern homes. Occasionally one also encounters muskrat and mink, and sometimes an otter.

There are also domesticated marsh dwellers. Tame geese are allowed to roam practically wild. They keep together in big flocks. Each one is branded by having part of its foot or bill cut in a certain way, so that it may be identified.

Hogs are also found on the marshes, living on wild oats and the roots of water plants. They also are branded with their owner's special mark. During the high tides, they look almost like hippopotami as they splash through the weeds and swim in the water. It is often said that hogs cannot swim, because if they did they would cut their throats with their front feet, but anyone who has ever seen them swimming during a high tide on a marsh knows that this is a fallacy. I have seen them swim in the surf of the ocean to get food that was drifting ashore.

On the favorable days there are always a number of boats hunting on the well-known sora marshes, and these boats usually crowd in to the places where the most sora happen to be. Where the grass is high it is often hard for the sportsmen to see one another, and the marsh will resound with the "hullos" of the pushers warning others of their near presence. Even then it is not uncommon for a gunner to get a neck full of shot from another not far off.

Although I have been shooting sora for about forty years, I have never seen a person badly injured from being shot. The worst I ever saw was a man hit on a tooth, which was broken off. I have never seen a man blinded or badly injured, although I have seen shot pierce the skin on several occasions.

Most of the pushers on these marshes have decidedly Indian characteristics. On the Pamunkey and Mattaponi Rivers, the upper branches of the York, there still exist Indian reservations, and on the Chickahominy there are also descendants of the red

men who were there when Jamestown was first established. These men regard the sora rail as the most mysterious creature that inhabits the face of the earth.

About the middle of last October a northeast storm started in. The wind blew from thirty-five to forty-five miles an hour, accompanied by sheets of rain. After the prolonged drought, this caused a flood. Some friends of mine who live on the York River phoned me and said the prospects for a big tide were very propitious.

From my home in Middleburg, Virginia, I drove a distance of 152 miles in three hours through the driving rain to the Mattaponi River. The tide was indeed a big one. The rail were lifted to the top of the wild oats, and it was astonishing how fast they jumped, compared with their performance when the tide is only normally high and the grass "deep." It was one of the most picturesque and interesting rail-shooting expeditions I have ever been on.

There were very few gunners on the marsh. The wind was driving the rain almost horizontally, and the water was quite rough where we had to pole with the boats. The tide was so high that it was several feet up the trunks of the forest trees along the shore, and the rail were actually going into the woods.

I had on flexible rubber clothing that was tight at the neck and wrists, with rubber boots and a southwester hat, and kept perfectly dry. My ammunition was in a water-proof leather-covered box, and I took out the shells in lots of ten and fifteen and put them in the pockets of my sleeveless canvas coat. The .410 cartridges became so wet that they broke off in the middle when fired, and I had great trouble in extracting them. I then shifted to the 28-gauge gun and had no further trouble. We killed our limit quickly, including both king and Virginia rail.

My pusher volunteered the information that the rail must come from frogs. I asked him how he arrived at that conclusion. He explained that the frogs "sing" with a certain note; then all of a sudden, wherever that note is heard, a sora rail jumps, and no frogs can be seen or found; that the sora has exactly the same

song as the frogs, and therefore the frogs must have been transformed into sora rail. He was sure also that the sora went into the mud in cold weather, but instead of becoming crawfish they became frogs and reappeared in the spring as frogs until the proper time, when they again assumed the shape of sora rail.

As the years go on I look forward with increasing interest to the sora shooting and visiting my old marsh friends, both human and animal. Properly protected, the sora, with its secretive habits and the ability to take care of itself, will long furnish us and our descendants with a great deal of interesting sport.

HIT BY A RATTLER¹

*The harrowing story of a man who lived
to tell about it*

By DR. CLARENCE H. MACDONALD

FOR YEARS I have read articles by authorities on what to do when struck by a venomous snake. Theory is a splendid thing, but facts are more interesting. A 6-foot 2-inch Florida diamond-back rattlesnake sank its fangs to the hilt in my flesh, and I am here to tell the story.

My greatest thrill is being alive today. I am convinced that I lived through this ordeal only because of certain exceptional factors. First, I took all the precautions which science prescribes, as swiftly and as drastically as possible. Second, when these failed, I had the expert help in a Miami hospital of a courageous group of doctors and nurses, specialists in the treatment of venom poisoning. Third, I happen to possess the constitution of an ox and a heart which, according to the doctors, must have been made of galvanized rhinoceros hide. That was a pretty fortunate combination of factors, and I needed them all. Which is another way of saying that being hit by a big rattlesnake is definitely grounds for prayer.

I was born and raised in Florida, and from my earliest childhood snakes have fascinated me. Snakes were my hobby then, and they still are. As a youngster I used to hunt and keep snakes

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of all kinds. My back yard was like a reptile house in a zoo, and when I remember how I handled the venomous breeds I wonder why I am still on earth.

Little did I realize as a boy what the strike of a rattler or a cottonmouth moccasin or a coral snake really meant. I guess my time just hadn't come. I was cocky, and knew nothing about fear or venom. I was never struck, had never seen anyone struck, and it hardly occurred to me that this might happen.

Years later I lectured to campers, Boy Scouts and other nature lovers about snakes. I promoted a snake-bite outfit, consisting of a specially made lance which would enter the flesh an inch and no further, a suction pump and a tourniquet. I spent much time in the heart of the Everglades, and learned much about snakes from the Seminole nation. It took me a long time to make contact with John Osceola, the present chief of the Seminoles.

One time I asked him, "John, snake ever bite Indian?"

"Yep, sometime," said John.

"Indian die?" I inquired.

"Yep, sometime," said John.

Snakes in Florida are mostly an Indian problem because the snakes and the Indians both live in the Everglades. An interesting point is that the Seminoles refuse on religious grounds to kill snakes; so naturally the Indians sometimes get into trouble.

The moccasins and rattlers won't molest anyone unless they are molested. Fatalities are due to carelessness on the part of hunters and fishermen or other people.

Take the case of my friend who kept the Wildcat Drug Store on the Tamiami Trail. Bill used to have a box full of rattlesnakes in front of his store for the amusement of tourists. People would peer in and try to make the rattlers rattle.

One morning a visitor asked Bill to pin one down so as to let him see the snake's fangs. Bill obliged, and as he grasped the snake behind the head it had time to turn and sink a single fang into his hand. Bill merely squeezed and sucked the wound. Took no trouble to cut it. Just "milked" it and continued to suck it. His hand began to swell. When his arm began to swell, the drug-store

crowd begged him to go to the hospital. But no; he knew what to do. In the afternoon he began to feel very bad indeed, and finally agreed to enter a hospital. He died in agony the next morning.

In November of 1936 a young fellow, a stranger in those parts, asked me to take him snake hunting. He had never seen a rattlesnake outside the zoo. I selected a region deep in the Glades where the water was very high, which forced snakes and animals on to high ground and naturally increased the wild population of the area.

Since this is the story of my fight with death, and the time element is quite important, I want to set down everything in detail. We started to hunt about 1:30 in the afternoon. At about 2 P.M. my companion discovered a rattlesnake. It was a big one, lying quietly in a thick coil, sunning itself.

It will seem strange to many, but it is a fact that the diamond-backs of the Everglades rarely rattle unless struck or bothered. A man can walk all around one and it will not buzz. I told the young fellow to get out the sack—we use an ordinary flour sack to carry snakes. Then I turned my attention to the rattler.

I never use a forked stick to pin the heads of snakes. Instead I have always found that the proper thing in my business, since I want to bring the snakes in alive from the bush, is the butt of a .22 rifle. I hold the rifle by the muzzle, stock down, and gradually press the snake's head to the ground with the butt of the gun. A solid, heavy thing like this is necessary to hold down a big snake's head on soft, mucky ground.

This procedure is possible because in Florida our rattlers do not strike much more than a third of their length. They cannot strike without coiling. So, once they are coiled, it is safe enough to stand pretty close to them, just out of reach of their lunge.

I took my stand and began to work the snake into the position required, holding the rifle in my left hand. After each lunge he was obliged to coil again. By this time he was angry, and buzzing hard. When he centered his head on top of the coil, I pressed gently but strongly downward. That pinioned his head. I worked the rifle down until the head was flat on the ground, held firm

under the butt. Then with my right hand I grasped him behind the head.

I quickly lifted him high above my head while I tried to straighten his long body by clamping it between my knees. He was mighty heavy—a thick, writhing object like a strong living muscle. I started to work him tail first into the sack. When only his head was out, I snapped it away and downward with a swift jerk, so that he could not strike at me as I let go. The action sent his head into the bag, as I expected, and I immediately twisted the mouth of the sack with a rotary motion which wound it tight.

So far everything had been according to Hoyle, as I had done it scores of times before. But then the unexpected happened—a combination of physical chances and rattlesnake luck that was, up to then, unknown to me. As I twisted the bag shut it bumped against my right thigh. The place where the bump occurred happened to be just the place where the snake was at that very instant blindly striking.

I felt a sharp blow, just above my kneecap, on the inside of the leg. The snake had struck right through the flour sack and the heavy cloth of my breeches. No doubt the force with which I had been winding the sack had added power to the blow. In any case, the fangs lodged in my flesh momentarily before the snake could extricate them. They felt like two hot needles being jabbed into me. Two tiny streams of blood trickled down my leg.

Professional snake hunters have always thought that a snake could not strike through a bag because he must have a solid foundation from which to unleash his blow. The solid foundation allows him to go into the typical spring-like S curve which he uses. And to think that innumerable times snake hunters, including myself, have carried bags full of big rattlers slung across the shoulders! I shudder now to think what might have happened had any of us been struck between the shoulders, where a man could not render first aid to himself.

When the big fellow hit me through the bag and hunting breeches, I immediately knotted the sack and flung it to one side, where he writhed in vain. I swiftly pulled my breeches down and

applied a regular army tourniquet about nine inches above the wound. As carefully as I could I adjusted this tourniquet so that its knot would press on the vein. Any Boy Scout knows as much, of course.

I was standing more or less on one leg, and the blow and shock had been severe; so I asked my young companion to support me, since I had a harder job to do next. I remember telling him that this had been not only his first rattlesnake, but probably the worst case of snake-bite he would ever see.

He steadied me while I began to use my lance. I cut deep. My first cut was from fang puncture to fang puncture, as deep as I could go. It made the blood run in a stream down my knee. Then I sliced downward from each puncture, bearing down heavily. Holding the lance on a diagonal, I cut a half moon under each incision to make amply sure I had gone in deep enough to reach the venom.

One glance at the heavy bulging load inside that sack on the ground convinced me that I needed to work fast and go deep. The snake, measured later, was 6 feet $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches long and monstrous in girth. His fangs were nearly an inch long, and it was evident that they had stored up a lethal dose of venom.

After the vigorous cutting I used a suction pump, together with "milking" and kneading, in my attempt to work out the venom. Within about ten minutes I had literally "bled myself white." I was getting nothing but lymph. So I relaxed my tourniquet, to give more blood an opportunity to enter my leg. Then I tightened up the tourniquet and grimly began to cut again. I knew that I was in a serious predicament. It was the quickest twenty minutes I had ever passed in my life, but I felt there was more to be done before I could rest easy.

There was about a quarter-mile walk through shrub and palmetto hammocks to my car, which was parked on a bumpy Glades back road. I lugged the buzzing snake in the bag. Since I had caught him, I thought I might as well bring him in.

By the time we reached the car my leg began to throb and swell. I could feel my boot getting tighter. I shall never forget

that ride. Every bump caused more throbbing. Then I began to feel bad all over. Just sick. I told the young fellow with me that I didn't understand why I felt so bad.

I had done what I thought was a good job of first aid, but the pain steadily increased until I had to grit my teeth at the bumps. It was a fifteen-mile ride to Buena Vista, nearest suburb of Miami. I rolled into my brother's yard, looking for him. He hopped into his car and hurried for a doctor. We were to meet as soon as possible at the Reptile Leather Company, farther along the road. There, shortly after, I got my first shot of serum while sitting on the floor. They shot it into my abdomen.

By now I couldn't stand, and had the queerest feeling of nausea. I wanted to go on to my home at Coral Gables, ten miles on. However, they persuaded me to stop at the first hospital on my way for a checkup. I agreed to this. Little did I know what I was to undergo there—or that if I hadn't stopped at the hospital nothing could have saved my life.

I was lifted out of the car and rushed to the operating table. The doctors didn't even take time for an anaesthetic, but started immediately. This time it hurt plenty. The decision then and there was for me to spend the night in the hospital. I spent many more.

When I was taken to my room, I felt terrible. I grew right uneasy too. It dawned on me that my drastic first-aid treatment, about which I had lectured so many years, had not been enough, and that I must have received a whale of a shot of venom directly into the large vein of the upper leg, which would rapidly carry it through the body and toward the heart.

The house physician had been in attendance on that famous case when the curator of the reptile house of the St. Louis zoo had been bitten by the deadly gaboon viper of North Africa. He proved a godsend.

This was on a Sunday afternoon, about four hours after I had been hit. I asked him to tell me frankly and honestly what he thought of my case. I said that he, being a professional man, needn't try to kid me, also a professional man, and that I really was entitled to know. He said, "Boy, you got it all right."

That wasn't exactly comforting, but it was just what I wanted. I knew now. I also realized that I was suffering from shock and from pain from the cutting of the wounds.

I got steadily worse. There was a terrible burning sensation inside me and the pain seemed to be increasing. My blood pressure began to drop. The venom of the rattlesnake is hematoxic. That is, it attacks the blood. My blood cells were beginning to break down. My leg continued to swell. I got a hypo every hour, which relieved the pain and allowed me some rest. My family was summoned that night for blood-transfusion tests.

The next morning I was in terrible distress. My blood was literally coming apart. This was dehydration, the breaking down of red blood corpuscles into lymph. One effect was a fiery sensation inside. Every time I attempted to drink a sip of water or retain a piece of ice in my parched mouth, I began to spew blood in big coagulated chunks. Blood pressure decreased. Swelling of my leg increased.

A toxicologist took blood slides every thirty minutes. My leg was elevated to induce drainage and an electric pad placed over the wound for the same purpose. Nothing helped much, and it was clear to the doctors and myself that I was getting worse. The thirst and constant vomiting of blood were whipping my strength.

In consultation it was decided to try something rarely, if ever, before attempted in any Miami hospital on a snake-bite case: namely, to inject 20 cc. of snake serum in each arm. I already had had what was approximately a maximum dose—10 cc. The intravenous injections were made. Presently it was obvious they hadn't helped.

I had often injected snake venom into rabbits and white rats while Research Director at the Florida Reptile Institute and in Miami. How well I recognized the symptoms!

That night two of the surgeons came into my room. They applied their stethoscopes, one to each arm, inside the elbow. When I learned they could not detect a pulse, I knew I was a sick naturalist. Adrenalin was instantly administered.

There was one more treatment to be taken, and only one. It

came right away. It was 1500 cc. of saline, say a quart and a half, injected with a big needle direct into my chest wall. This was what saved my life.

Everybody seemed pleased on Tuesday morning to see that I was alive. The congratulations of doctors and nurses were more revealing than their hushed manner of the night before.

But more bad news—gangrene was threatening in my leg. During the night the leg had turned black. It swelled to about the size of my waist. It was fascinating to see the dark line creeping upward. I had made the first hurdle. Here was the second, and a worse one. If the doctors had felt that I could stand the shock of it, they would have amputated. Instead, they went as far as they could. They cut a large drain in my upper thigh.

With constant hot compresses and my leg elevated high in the air, results started quickly. The swelling began to recede. The gangrenous condition was being conquered. The general toxic condition had changed to a localized one. I was now able to sip a little water and retain ice. I could imagine nothing sweeter in life than just to be able to have a little ice in my mouth.

The next day doctors came from long distances to have a look at me, my legs and my charts. I didn't know it at the time, but my case was Miami's most famous.

Within a day or two I could accept fruit juices. I stayed in the hospital ten days in all. I was in bed at home for two months. And for three months more I was a cripple. After that I started rattlesnake hunting again.

I have that snake's skin mounted in my home. It looks mighty impressive because—as any naturalist will tell you—a skin stretches somewhat on mounting. Whenever I look at it, it reminds me of the advice I always give—a paraphrase of W. C. Fields' famous gag: "Never give a rattler an even break!"

SUBMARINE DUCK HUNTING¹

*A wild duck flying over the Salton Sea
can be 259 feet in the air and still be
below the level of the ocean*

By JOHN EDWIN HOGG

ANY HUNTER who has attempted the little hide-and-seek game of retrieving a wounded duck in open water is usually convinced that all ducks are submarine ducks. The title of this story, however, does not allude to the propensities of ducks to swimming under water, but to shooting ducks on an inland salt sea 260 feet below the level of the ocean. The scene is on the Salton Sea in the middle of the Colorado Desert of southern California, one of the strangest bodies of water on the face of the earth—the lowest on the Western Hemisphere, and the lowest on the surface of our planet with the single exception of the Dead Sea of Palestine. A duck flying over the surface of the Salton Sea can be 259 feet in the air and still be a submarine duck in the sense of being below the level of the ocean.

The Salton Sea is perhaps the one body of water in the United States about which the least is known. Some of the geographies in use in our public schools are erroneously teaching the younger generation that the Salton Sea is but a memory of past geographical ages, when as a matter of fact it is a young ocean 40 miles in length, about 18 miles in width, and averaging 65 feet in depth. Look for the Salton Sea in Imperial and Riverside Counties, and

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even on some modern maps you will see that the map makers still continue their campaign of educating public ignorance by indicating the sea with a dotted circular line and labeling it "Dry bed of ancient desert lake."

When geographers and map makers pass out such misinformation regarding a sea which supports a profitable commercial fishing industry and which, according to the United States Biological Survey, harbors more waterfowl than any other body of water within the continental limits of the nation, it is not strange that the sea has had little exploitation as the sportsman's paradise that it really is. All this is without making any mention of its possibilities as a health resort with an unsurpassed winter climate, the mineral hot springs about its shores, wonderful bathing beaches, live volcanoes, magnificent opportunities for boating and all manner of aquatic sports, and scenic beauty that should make the lakes of the Swiss Alps look to their laurels by comparison.

The duck- and goose-shooting season in California opens October 1st and closes January 15th, and between those dates it's a lazy hunter or a miserable scattergun marksman who can't bag here his legal limit of savory birds for a week's shooting. The transcontinental tourist motoring to California over the Borderland Trail has the Salton Sea waterfowl shooting right on his path. The railroad traveler has but to see that his ticket entitles him to a stop-over at Niland, the junction point for the Imperial Valley. If he drops off the Pullman there, it is only a five-mile flivver trip to Mullet Island in the Salton Sea.

The Salton Sea is 225 miles from Los Angeles—on the other side of a desert and a towering range of snow-clad mountains. There was waterfowl shooting to be had at a lesser distance, but none so alluring to us as that of the Salton Sea. In this day of automotive transportation mere mileage doesn't mean much.

With duck and goose shooting as the reward for a 500-mile round trip, Bill Wiedy and I rolled out of Los Angeles with a motorcycle and side-car outfit loaded with guns and ammunition. After several weeks of cloudless skies and balmy fall days, our start was made in a downpour of rain—one of those early days of

the semi-tropical rainy season when the skies cut loose as if someone were overhead with a fire hose. The worst of it was that for the advantage gained in the type of vehicle with which we had elected to travel, tops and windshields had been sacrificed.

The lack of these rather essential accessories of automobile travel, however, was made up for by our wearing apparel—heavy woollens to withstand the cold of the high elevations, topped with slickers and sou'westers. We were rainproof from the tips of our toes to our tonsorial foliage, including the heavy aviation goggles “doped” with glycerine and alcohol, so that the rain could patter against them without obscuring our vision. Rain meant no more to us than to a couple of the ducks we were going to hunt, and by traveling in it we had the highways pretty much to ourselves.

The first hundred miles through the orange and lemon groves of the valleys were reeled off over the polished asphalt mostly at about forty miles per hour, until we began climbing up into the San Gorgonio Pass, the narrow crack between the San Bernardino and San Jacinto Mountains, which is one of the half-dozen natural gateways in and out of southern California. As the hand of the auto-altimeter alongside the speedometer swung round with the rising elevation, the rain changed to sleet. It got bitter cold, and eventually we found ourselves drilling along through the top of the pass in as wild a blizzard as I ever experienced in Canada.

Once over the pass, however, we knew that a change of climate awaited us. On the other side the trail drops down off the mountains, down, down and down, until the altimeter ran backward to indicate the negative elevation of the Coachella Valley. There we ran out from under the clouds and into the brilliant desert sunshine. It warmed our backs, soothed my fingers that ached with the cold and, layer at a time, brought us out of our garments.

Off came the slickers and sou'westers, “tin pants,” pea jackets and sweaters. We shed clothing all along the line until the side car resembled a hock shop. By the time we checked in at Palm Springs for lunch we were down to bare hands and shirt sleeves—and almost uncomfortably warm at that! From there on to the Salton Sea the route is mostly a ribbon of concrete through

the desert, where for miles and miles, and scores of miles, we kept the speedometer hand on fifty or better, checking in at Mullet Island just seven hours after leaving home, and with an hour of that time spent absorbing nourishment at Palm Springs.

Captain Charlie, having been previously advised of our coming, was there to greet us. He assured us there were ducks and geese on the sea by the millions, and that his boats, decoys, blinds and even his dog, if we wanted him, were at our disposal. Although I was somewhat tired as the result of our dash to the sea, I was anxious to get in a few shots at web-footed game as soon as possible. Wiedy declared that "Hell's Kitchen," as Captain Charlie's place is known, because of its location on top of a volcano and 200 feet below sea-level, looked comfortable enough for him for the balance of the day.

There was still a scant half hour of sunshine left and, having had no duck shooting for several years, I wanted to take advantage of that half hour. When I told the Captain that I didn't know whether I could hit a duck on the wing or not, he said, "Well, if you feel healthy enough to try it after the drive you've made today, we can go right down here in the marsh alongside the island and find out." Thereupon I got into my hip boots, pocketed a few shells and, with Captain Charlie and his dog Prospector, set out for the marsh.

The marsh was a rank growth of tules. The water was only a few inches deep, but beneath the water there was the familiar brand of Colorado River silt that the whole Imperial Valley is made of. It is fine stuff to grow crops on under irrigation with the valley's twelve months a year of summer weather, but it is "the hen's teeth" from the standpoint of the duck hunter wading the marshes with hip boots.

Perhaps I should not say "from the standpoint of the hunter," because there is just the trouble. When a fellow gets out in the marsh, he hasn't any "standpoint." If one doesn't watch his business mighty carefully, he'll bog down.

When you hunt the marshes, you take a step, push the tules aside, and then try to get the leg you last stepped with. If you're

real careful, or lucky, you'll be able to get your foot out of the mud without unjointing your hip and knee, without losing your boot, or without driving the other leg down over your boot-top. Every step has to be taken in this fashion, and it is slow, laborious business. It's a lucky hunter, or one skilled in the "art" of wading, who can get very far without falling flat a few times or bogging down so he has to wiggle out of his boots to make the marsh let go of him.

It took just about a hundred yards of the marsh hunting to familiarize me with the nature of it, but at the end of that first hundred yards I was rewarded for my efforts by a pintail drake that went rocketing skyward out of the tules about forty yards ahead of me. Just as the Captain yelled out, "There he goes! Let him have it!" I lined down on Mr. Pintail and squeezed the trigger. The dog dashed ahead to retrieve the bird, and almost simultaneously another pintail bounced out of the marsh. Again I connected and the dog Prospector brought in the birds.

Almost before we had time to take a look at their magnificent plumage, the last rays of sunlight flickered out over the snow-clad summit of Mt. San Jacinto. The shooting was over for the day, and we slushed back to Mullet Island.

Returning to "Hell's Roast," the gastronomic department of "Hell's Kitchen," we found Jack, Captain Charlie's master of the pots and cookstove, in the act of dishing up a steaming mulligan to Bill Wiedy and a half-dozen other duck hunters sojourning at the place. "You're just in time!" exclaimed Jack, as he dove into the mulligan pot with the ladle.

Our program for the following day was scheduled to be blind shooting over decoys on the sand-bar where the Alamo River pours its floods of fresh water into the salty Salton Sea. The particular blind to which Captain Charlie assigned us was in a pass which the myriads of waterfowl from the sea use as a submarine air route to the puddling of alfalfa and grain fields in the below-ocean-level Imperial Valley. We asked the Captain to call us at 4:30 A.M. that we might be out on the sea to take advantage of the sunrise shooting.

Subsequently we discovered that the Captain has an alarm clock for arousing duck hunters that is distinctly of his own creation. At the appointed hour for arousing duck hunters he orders his dog Prospector to "Go shake 'em out!" Thereupon the dog leaps upon the first cot, tears the blankets off the sleeping duck hunter, and quickly jumps from cot to cot, repeating the performance.

The first rays of daylight were just beginning to streak down over the Salton Sea from the Chocolate Mountains of the Arizona Desert as Wiedy and I pulled out with our boat. The sea was like a mirror—without even a ripple on it—and the water looked as black as ink, even though the sun was shining with glittering silvery splendor on the lofty snow-clad summits of the San Jacintos and San Gorgonios that towered nearly two miles into the heavens to form the western background. Long V-shaped streaks of geese were honking all over the sky, and innumerable flocks of innumerable ducks whizzed overhead until the atmosphere was a-buzz and a-whistle with them. A couple of years ago when I flew a rice patrol airplane in the rice fields of Glenn and Colusa Counties, employed by the farmers to shoo the waterfowl away from their crops of grain, I thought I had seen a lot of ducks; but there were a thousand ducks on the Salton Sea to every one I saw in the rice country.

"Let's pull over to those islands out there," said Wiedy, as I tugged at the oars, and he pointed toward what appeared to be huge sand-bars well out into the sea.

"Islands!" I exclaimed. "Why, my dear boy, there are no islands in that part of the sea. Take my field glasses and look at them."

Bill looked with the glasses, and his jawbone dropped until it left his mouth open. "Great Caesar's ghost!" he ejaculated. "They're floating islands of ducks and geese—*islands* like the one that Jonathan Swift wrote about in 'Gulliver's Travels'!"

Of course those islands of ducks weren't going to sit there and let us row up to within gun range of them, so we pulled for our blind. It was about five miles from Mullet Island to the blinds in

the mouth of the Alamo River, and long before we got there, pulling at the oars to shove the boat through that oily, twice-as-salty-as-ocean water, we surely wished for an outboard motor. The trip was Bill's first experience with ducks, but he had managed to knock down a mallard drake, a pintail and a redhead with about ten shells before we ever got to the blind.

By the time we arrived the flight of ducks was on in earnest. They were whizzing overhead in unnumbered thousands, and at times we ducked our heads for fear they'd bump into us or knock our hats off.

Our decoys were in the boat, but we decided we didn't need them. We just anchored the boat out on the bar, splashed along with our boots to the blinds, and began laying down the barrage. For the next half hour the sky rained ducks and chilled shot. They scarcely gave us time to shoot, reload and retrieve before half a dozen new flocks would be tearing overhead—going like winged shrapnel.

By nine o'clock I had my limit of spoonbills, widgeons, teal, pintails and redheads, with a couple of canvasbacks and greenheads thrown in for good measure. The flight had slumped off considerably, the birds coming over singly, in pairs, or in flocks of half a dozen at a time. Bill counted his birds and found he had fourteen; so I agreed to stick it out with him in the hope that he'd get his limit, and devote my attention to snow geese or Canada honkers.

There had been quite a few flocks of geese over the blinds, but all of them had flown so high there wasn't much chance at them with No. 5s. My day of duck shooting over, I reloaded my gun with highbase shells containing $3\frac{1}{2}$ drams of bulk smokeless and $1\frac{1}{8}$ ounces of No. 2s. Then I dropped back on my soap box, which was all that separated me from about a foot of Alamo River water, and waited. Meanwhile, Bill was banging away at straggling flocks of ducks.

Around the Salton Sea there are always a few million white pelicans. They coast around through the air with aldermanic dignity, and occasionally some boob hunter plugs one full of lead,

mistaking these magnificent protected birds for snow geese. Therefore, it is not surprising that after three or four hundred pelicans had slithered along over my blind, I paid little attention to a lone white bird with coal-black wing tips that came sailing clear across the sea as straight toward my gun barrel as ever anything could fly.

For several minutes I watched the bird, then decided to have a look at "the pelican" with my field glasses. I got the glasses out of the case, focused them on the bird, and then almost dropped the costly instrument in the water at the bottom of the blind when the powerful lenses revealed that I was looking at a snow goose, not a pelican. For the lack of some other more convenient place to deposit the glasses, I hung them around my neck, crouched in the blind, and never moved so much as an eyelid, although by this time the glare of the desert sun on that silent, glassy sea was almost blinding.

I just squinted and watched as the goose winged his way along not thirty feet over the water, every second coming nearer. Peering through the willows, those were tense, nerve-tingling moments, until it appeared that the goose was about to bump into the blind. He was scarcely fifty feet away when I raised up majestically and took a bead on him. Without a sound other than the swish of his wings through the air, the goose swung his neck upward and climbed for the sky. But he was too late!

His neck and wings doubled heavenward and he came down like a shooting star, landing in the sea with a splash that sounded as if a sack of cement might have been dumped out of an airplane. "Atta boy!" yelled Bill.

During the remaining hours of the morning the flight sifted down to spoonbills, from the straggling flocks of which Wiedy managed to bring down an occasional hen or drake to fill his quota of the day's bag. With the day closed in triumph, we loaded our outfit into the boat and pulled back to Mullet Island. Wiedy rowed the boat, and meanwhile I busied myself drawing the birds, so by the time we arrived at the island they were all ready for a trip to the cold storage plant at Niland.

I was anxious to get a few close-up photographs of the islands of ducks and geese out on the sea, and to this end Captain Charlie agreed to take me out next day with his motor boat, The Salton. His other boat, The Pirate, was laid up for repairs, and even The Salton could not be induced to run without some sort of a battery to fire the motor. This little detail, however, was eliminated by my taking one of the storage batteries off my motorcycle. Then, with our entire outfit, we rowed out into the sea at daybreak next morning to where The Salton lay at anchor in deep water.

We installed the battery and, after considerable coaxing, the wheezy old motor kicked out a few woolly little explosions. Finally we pulled up the anchor and got under way, but didn't go more than a mile or two out into the sea before the motor played out completely. Captain Charlie and one of his fisherman assistants, known as Slim, got down over the motor and began to crank, sweat, tinker, and swear. They kept this up for over an hour without being able to get a "shot" out of the motor and then the photographing trip was abandoned.

Fortunately, we had two skiffs in tow, so after anchoring the boat, the Captain and Slim shoved off for Mullet Island. Bill and I took the other boat and headed for our old blind at the mouth of the Alamo. By this time it was nearly noon, and almost simultaneously Wiedy made a most disheartening discovery: we'd left our lunches in Captain Charlie's rowboat, and the two oarsmen in it were now out of sight in the direction of Mullet Island. We were a full mile away from The Salton, but back to the boat we went.

I had a dim vision of having seen some commissary stores aboard the craft, and we didn't propose to go hungry all day if we had to turn to piracy to avoid it. Sure enough, aboard the boat in a forward locker we found all sorts of canned goods, some ship-biscuits, coffee, and a gasoline stove. We simply went aboard and helped ourselves, knowing we could square it with the Captain later on.

After getting pretty well filled up we pulled over to the blind, and managed to keep up a desultory bombardment for the rest of

the afternoon. The flights of birds were very straggling. There were never any big flocks, but more often single birds or pairs. Most of these seemed to be traveling on through tickets or flew too high to be within gun range.

We kept knocking down an occasional bird and bogging in the mud retrieving them, until toward sundown we had accounted for twenty-four birds. We hadn't bagged our limits that day, but we had all the pleasure and wholesome recreation we'd come to the sea to get.

For our remaining days at the Salton Sea, our chief diversions were eating and hunting. The shooting held out for the length of our week's stay. One by one we picked off an occasional snow goose or honker, until by the end of the week we had the eight birds each to make up the weekly bag limit allowed us under the game laws. We made several trips to the cold storage plant at Niland as the days slipped by—all too quickly.

Then the inevitable day arrived when, instead of pulling out to the duck blinds as we would like to have done, we shook hands with the Captain and set out for the final run to Niland, this time to gather up the birds we had left instead of leaving a new string. With the springs of the side car about to crack under the weight of our game and a fifty-pound chunk of ice, we took the trail for home.

HOW FAST CAN A FISH SWIM?¹

Timing the speed of salt-water game fish

By HENRY J. HOWELL

ANGLERS are often accused of exaggeration, not only concerning their actual experiences, but in their observations of related things. Aside from this, certain things are always controversial, as, for example, the size and speed of fishes and the length of time which is necessary to subdue them. Accurate scales, a tape-measure and a stop-watch should be included in every fisherman's equipment. Also, as was once suggested to me as a measure of personal precaution, a notary public would often come in handy. Long years ago I resorted more or less to yardstick methods, with results that were sometimes rather astonishing, even to myself.

In my early teens a group of us were gathered at Montauk Point, surf-casting for striped bass and a late run of large bluefish. Good fish were being taken daily, and many were the tales told of the time which had been consumed in landing them through the surf along the boulder-strewn shore. A friend and I had listened patiently, saying little but thinking much, until our host and another widely overstepped the bounds of credulity. Then, metaphorically speaking, we jumped on them.

It seemed that a 35- or 38-pound bass, on an 18-thread line, had given such a battle that forty minutes were required to beach him. One assertion led to another. As a result of this discussion,

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late the following afternoon my friend and I joined forces for further scientific research.

We each used rather light rods, 3/0 reels of a now almost forgotten type, practically without drag, and No. 15 special lines, which are half the size of a 15 regular and theoretically half its breaking strength. As lines were then made, they were actually about one-third the breaking strength of that with which our host had taken his 40-minute 38-pounder. Between us, on one outlying reef, in a little over half an hour we took six bass weighing from slightly over 18 pounds to a little under 33, the three largest averaging over 30 pounds. All were caught on metal jigs and through a heavy, treacherous surf. The least time required to land any one fish was a few seconds under 4 minutes; and the longest, $5\frac{1}{2}$ minutes. So much for the time.

The speed of a bass on the hook had also been discussed. This we were not in a position to check, as we were fighting the fish against time and were holding them to the limit our tackle would bear. But our combined opinion was, and still is, that 33-pound bass, beyond which size they are inclined to slow down, have a limit of speed of not more than 12 miles per hour in their first and fastest off-shore run. At Montauk, I almost invariably fish alone; so I have never been able to check the speed of a striped bass with a stop-watch.

Bluefish and weakfish are likewise unbelievably slow. And according to my personal observations, the same applies to each and every one of our fresh-water fish, the muskalonge and the Atlantic salmon not excepted. Having had no experience with very large tuna, or any of the greater oceanic fishes, I am not qualified to speak authoritatively of these. Even so, if and when their speed is checked with a stop-watch, I venture to predict a wide margin of error in present-day beliefs.

On light tackle and timed for a known distance, the best authenticated record I have is that of a 67-pound wahoo: 200 yards in 11 seconds flat, or at the rate of a little over 41 miles per hour. This proves what I claimed for the wahoo many years ago: that he is one of the fastest fish that swim, if not the fastest.

The little white marlin is unquestionably fast; so also are occasional sailfish. Although the speed of the white marlin is still an open question and there are various opinions about his sprinting ability, I am yet to be convinced that he has the edge on a big wahoo. The big barracudas of the shallow flats are lightning-swift on the strike and for the first few moments on the hook, but not on a straightaway run long enough to be measured and timed.

I know of no fish which offers opportunities for accurate timing comparable with the bonefish, which is claimed to be the swiftest fish the seven seas over. He is both a sprinter and a distance runner, and his habits and tactics are such that his speed, even to split seconds, is easily timed. My best authenticated run of a bonefish was 100 yards in $9\frac{1}{5}$ seconds, or at the rate of approximately 21 miles per hour, with all conditions favoring the aquatic speedster.

Guesses of other anglers vary from a modest three to almost five times as fast. And these were presumably the speeds of fish under normal conditions: that is, with reels which had more or less drag, and greater or less thumb-pressure on the line. Also, the fish were presumably caught in water either so deep that they would not, or so shallow that they could not, appear at their best. In the case of the timed bonefish, not only was he allowed to run, unchecked by either an appreciable drag or thumb-pressure, but a particular place was chosen for the performance, with foreknowledge of every detail, except of course the size of the fish, which, as it happened, was a $9\frac{1}{2}$ -pounder built for speed.

The dolphin is also claimed to be amazingly fast, and for a fish so shaped he is fast. Nevertheless his speed barely enables him to keep pace with a flying-fish on the wing and to nab it as it loses momentum and drops back into the water. The flying-fish is so tiny that it appears to be "flying" much faster than it really is.

Gauging the speed of a flying-fish by that of a 17- or 18-knot steamer, only when sailing directly down, or quartering with, a fairly strong wind does it appear to travel faster than about 20 land-miles per hour. Straight down-wind, more often than not a

dolphin is badly outdistanced; in fact, it usually does not even attempt to follow the flying-fish.

The classical dolphin is, of course, not a fish, but a mammal of the porpoise kind. I believe he is the fastest thing that swims. In ten or a dozen feet of water a 30-mile-an-hour motorboat can run a common porpoise to a standstill in short order. The gray dolphin, however, loafs along in front of an 800-foot liner making 25 land-miles an hour, and then, just to warm himself up, it would seem, throws himself sideways, clear of the ship, and executes a complete circle about it while one is slowly counting ten. After this demonstration he takes his former position at the bow, as though nothing had happened. Those who are so inclined may figure his speed. The question is, how fast does he travel?

For porpoises of the coastwise kind I haven't much use; they have spoiled too many good fishing days for me. But from the upper platform of Alligator Reef Lighthouse, down among the Florida Keys, I have, on numerous occasions, been fascinated by their crafty methods of acquiring a coveted bit of food.

I have spent many days at the lighthouse, merely to watch the fish and other life about it, only now and then fishing from the lower platform for gray snappers and the like. From this elevation one has a panoramic view of the surrounding reefs and wide expanses of dazzling white coral sands, and in time learns to know the ways of many species of fish, and even of individuals, that tarry in this neighborhood. At one time or another, practically all of the bottom fish native to the Florida reef are to be found there. Schools of barracudas, great and small, cero-mackerel and a dozen other kinds often gang together and make war on the balaos and still smaller fry which have sought refuge there. Seldom an hour passes that one or more great sharks fail to make a passing call; and now and again a porpoise cruises over the field.

More often than not, a school of a dozen to twenty or more big houndfish hang in the lee of the spidery lighthouse structure, where they have easy pickings from the dense masses of sardines which, despite the harrying snappers, cling to its shelter. Similarly, the houndfish are good pickings for occasional wise old porpoises.

Each time the procedure is the same. Like a shadow, unseen and unsuspected, the porpoise appears from the eastward, keeps close to the concealing structure, and then plunges straight at the houndfish, driving them away from the lighthouse, helter-skelter, out over the white sandy bottom.

Quick as his action is, the porpoise unfailingly picks out the biggest houndfish of the lot. Then, regardless of how the houndfish may try to confuse his trail or how close he may come to one of its fellows, the porpoise never quits his first choice. In the beginning of the chase, as he alternately runs on his tail, swims and makes long leaps ahead, the houndfish may have a little edge on the porpoise for speed, and may even gain a lead of a hundred feet or so; but not for long. Dodge, twist, and change course as it may, the porpoise is always right on its tail.

The whole chase, back and forth, in and out, always in the vicinity of the lighthouse, may last for almost a mile, although it is usually ended in half that distance. At the end, in a slow roll, the porpoise shoots ahead and, half on his side, gathers the houndfish in. Then he idly lies at the surface for a breathing space before he goes in search of another victim.

Exactly how fast a houndfish actually travels in his first burst of speed I have no means of telling. Judging by the known speed of a porpoise, it must be very close to 30 miles an hour. When pushed, as he travels both by air and by water, I rate him as one of the swiftest of our south Florida fishes.

WISCONSIN¹

By HAROLD TITUS

IN DISCUSSING Wisconsin's recreational opportunities or conservation problems, you may start at any old point that comes handy; but before you know it, you're going to be up to your neck in muskalonge. Not, of course, that there isn't a whale of a lot to talk about besides this tiger of the lakes, for Wisconsin is right out in front as far as variety of outdoor assets is concerned. But you'll find yourself chin-deep in muskie lore because Wisconsin has a feature and a problem that just isn't found anywhere else.

They will tell you, in Wisconsin, that they have more muskalonge water than any other locality on the face of the earth. They'll tell you that more muskie fishermen prowls their lakes annually than head for any other portion of the globe. They'll show you that more money has gone into the study of muskalonge affairs in Wisconsin than in any other state, and perhaps more than has been expended in all other muskie areas combined. It is seldom that a group of fish administrators can be found who are as convinced they are on the right track as are the Wisconsin hatchery heads when it comes to muskalonge. And, of course, they had better be, because their Conservation Department spends up to \$75,000 a year asking outsiders to join the home folks in a little line-wetting and the muskie is the one species they have to talk about that few others have.

But don't get it in your mind that, because this state has an

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item which rates top billing and feels that the management problems are well in hand, other resources and problems are given the brushoff, or that all other outdoor puzzles which at once plague and inspire administrators and researchers have been solved. It isn't so. Wisconsin is engaged in major ventures galore—some of them settled down to satisfactory routines, others still in the experimental stages and due for long pulls.

As in the other Lake States, the Wisconsin Conservation Department is faced with conditions which range from those involving fertile prairie on the south to virgin timber on the north. And lacing through it all are great expanses of cut-over country which must be kept producing one thing or another to sustain local populations. To do the job, the Department will spend more than \$2,500,000 in a typical year. Over \$1,000,000 of this comes directly from hunters and fishermen in the form of license fees. Last year, 262,000 residents bought fishing licenses, and 150,000 non-residents joined them on the state's 7,000 lakes and 10,000 miles of streams. About 330,000 Wisconsin folks bought hunting licenses and of these, 118,000 got deer tags as well. That makes a lot of customers to keep satisfied.

It's always interesting to take a look at what these license-buyers get for their money. Wisconsin conducts no general creel census, but comparative statistics are available on game yields, because hunters are compelled by law to record their kills. So we find the rabbit take ranging from a low of 598,000 in 1938—when populations were down—to over 3,000,000 in 1932, which makes a goodly yield of cottontails, snowshoes and jacks from a state with an area of 56,000 square miles.

When Wisconsin hunters don't knock down over 1,000,000 squirrels it's an off year, and the raccoon addicts will bag nearly 15,000 in a good season. For a long time Wisconsin had alternating open and closed seasons on deer, but since 1938 they have been legal targets each fall, with the harvest running up to better than 40,000 bucks. It isn't a big enough kill, by the way. Like all other deer territory, Wisconsin has too many in spots.

Of game birds, there's a nice choice, and a dash of headache,

too. Quail in some of the southern and central counties are still numerous enough to stand an occasional short open season. Since the last cyclic low of ruffed grouse in 1936-37 the population has bounced back far enough to show a kill in excess of 350,000 in 1941.

The grouse country starts in the southwestern corner of the state, touching all but the lower tier of counties, and spreads east and northward clear to Lake Superior. On the way it picks up chicken and sharptail, and these birds are available to the guns in a dozen central eastern counties. While the kill of these last-named species, once so abundant, will run up only to 75,000 a season Wisconsin was a leader in attempting to devise management measures. For a decade technicians have been working on the problems involved, and final recommendations were delayed only by war. Bringing the birds back will be a chore, but here's one state that's trying.

The pheasant has come to occupy a big place in Wisconsin hunter interest through the agricultural areas and makes another big chore for the Department. Statistics show that the annual bag has increased with few setbacks, and local folks attribute the success largely to game-farm activities and an intensive program of winter feeding. A quarter million ringneck chicks have been hatched in a season at the Poynette Game Farm, the bulk of which have been sent out to cooperators to rear and release. Over 200 tons of grain will be distributed by the state to sportsmen's clubs, even in mild winters, to help the birds through, while the groups themselves will better than match the state's ante. Over 5,000 feeding stations are commonly maintained during pinch periods.

In 1924, Wisconsin had its first open season on Hungarian partridges. This bird hasn't yet set the state on fire over local prospects of abundance, but he's taken hold and may rate high in importance some day.

Ducks? Oh, 1,000,000 or so a year, and the boys don't kick. Wisconsin is something more than a flag stop on the Mississippi flyway.

All hunting so far. And we did start out talking about fishing,

and muskies in particular. But the object of this tangent is to indicate some of the things which the Conservation Department has to try to do besides managing its muskalong population so that it will be a fixture. And another one of the things it has to do is provide places for the boys to hunt all this game they kill.

In this field, Wisconsin has a somewhat unique setup, especially when the pursuit is of wild-land species. It has a string of a dozen public hunting grounds, ranging from a mere 40-acre patch up to a 20,000-acre block. Some of them are state-owned; others are leased. And it has 70 licensed private hunting preserves to take care of a few ringneck hunters. But it has forest areas where "No Trespassing" signs will never be known all over the place.

Here is one of the few forest states where rural zoning has made a place for itself. Twenty-six of the northern counties have availed themselves of the opportunity and dedicated parts of their areas to forest, recreational or agricultural areas. This has made it not only easy to forbid the clearing and settlement of more cut-over land where that land might better be dedicated to the production of timber and game; but in over 500 cases, through Federal and local activity, settlers already established in remote locations have been moved elsewhere—lock, stock, barrel and dog—and their fields put back to the uses for which they are best suited.

So, in addition to the 8 State Forests with their 200,000 acres, there are 26 county forests totaling nearly 2,000,000 more acres, toward development of which the state donates both cash and technical assistance. This means well-distributed, well-consolidated large blocks of land where the guns may always go and where any "No Hunting" sign simply means a refuge area and not a special privilege. This makes a larger acreage than that of either the State or National Forests in Wisconsin, and is a better asset to the hunter than a few huge chunks of country, any one of which may be a long way from where you happen to be.

Besides these projects, toss in another 150,000 acres of Forest Crop Land because the state offers tax-concession inducements to private interests to grow timber. These areas are also open to the public.

As for refuges, Wisconsin favors small ones, and plenty of them. This year the number stands at 215, with a combined acreage of 333,000. In addition, special closed areas are set up during deer season in response to local need; last year these totaled 50,000 acres.

Of the many current Pittman-Robertson projects, acquisition of the famous Horicon Marsh is outstanding. This is a cooperative undertaking between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the State Conservation Department. The Federal agency is acquiring 18,000 acres, and the state 11,000. The bill for the state's share of purchase and development will run over \$200,000, and 75 per cent of the area will be sanctuary and the balance public hunting ground.

So there you have the highlights of the game picture, and it is primarily the field of the home folks. We have mentioned the official play for out-state sportsmen, but that is entirely concerned with fishing. Wisconsin's customers for non-resident hunting licenses are not numerous, but better than half the licensed anglers are from outside the state boundaries.

This item of gearing-in the proper exploitation of fishing resources with their management is everlastingly important. In Madison you'll be told that response to the attempt to get vacationers into the state will bring nearly 35,000 inquiries. The replies carry specific information about where to go, what to do and how much cash to take along. In addition, Wisconsin railroads overlook no bets in stimulating angler travel.

Furthermore, Wisconsin strives to equip itself to back up all the claims made as to the variety and quality of tourist accommodations. Twenty-one State Parks absorb part of the visitors; 55 recreational camp-sites on county forests take care of still more. And private enterprise does the rest, especially in the more northern counties, where tourist traffic is a determining influence on economic welfare.

To get 'em in and give 'em a place to sleep and eat is one thing; to cut down the time between bites for 'em is another. That's the meaning of promotional success for the fisheries workers.

In many other states, recent years have seen a marked trend away from dependence on hatchery systems as a first line of defense to keep fishing good against mounting rod pressure. Not so in Wisconsin. Lake and stream improvement and other management measures have, here and there, stolen the show from the hatcheries. But in Wisconsin the improvement programs have largely been judged wanting. Installations in trout streams were in many instances unstable; artificial-sanctuary and food-producing structures in lakes didn't do what the Department hoped they would. Erosion control is being strongly stressed, and an extensive program of stream-side planting now goes on. But along with these activities, hatchery stocking has reached incredible heights with the problems involved, giving the biological staff its biggest chores.

In 1937, anglers were startled by sworn statements from Wisconsin to the effect that over 1,000,000,000 fish had been distributed from hatcheries to waters of the state. By 1940 the score was 1,500,000,000! Due to the war emergency, such a scale is impossible to maintain, of course, but totals continue to be relatively astronomical.

Now, while Wisconsin waters contain all the fish native to the zone, and while Lake Michigan with its distinctive resources is on one side and the Mississippi on the other, you will find special emphasis confined to trout, bass, wall-eyed pike and that old challenger, the muskalonge. These are the fish which the home folks and outsiders want, the ones to which Wisconsin waters are adapted and the ones that get the most attention from the Conservation Department.

While there's fishing of some sort only a few minutes by automobile from any point in any county, the range of species that have to stand the gaff can be rather neatly plotted. Fifty-one of the 71 counties contain trout streams. Every last one yields bass, although those along the southeastern border are classed as secondary producers. Wall-eyed pike range starts in the south-central counties and sweeps northward, touching Lake Michigan above Milwaukee and the Mississippi west of Eau Claire. And as for

muskalonge—well, he waits to fool you in the clear, clean waters of 23 northern counties, and a look at the map will indicate that those counties are literally plastered with lakes.

In common with most states, Wisconsin is placing more and more emphasis on stocking legal-sized trout. Especially is this true in those streams where pressure is highest. Hundreds of thousands of fingerlings are annually planted as well, but nothing has been turned up here which promises to point the way toward a solution of the trout population problem in regularly pounded rivers.

But with the walleye and muskalonge, Wisconsin has broken precedent. All the pikes are notoriously tough customers for hatchery men to handle past the fry stage; but when the nationwide shift from fry to fingerlings set in, Wisconsin was not dismayed by the complexities offered by the pike family.

For many long years the Department kept trying to carry muskies and walleyes along to a point where they could not only rustle their own food, but cope with natural enemies. In 1940 the first release of walleye fingerlings was made. Only 1,400 were in the lot, but by this year the total of 689,807 in the fingerling range were liberated. Fry-planting of the species continues, but the planting crews are most choosy about where they go. Much has been discovered in the state about species associations, and hatchery output goes only where it will mingle with indirect competition at the most. Anyhow, that is a principal objective.

But, important as the walleye is and impressive as are walleye statistics, it's the muskalonge that makes Wisconsin take down its hair and do tall talking. It was in 1935 that the first fingerlings of the species were grown in Wisconsin hatcheries. That year, 24 potential tigers, averaging 9 inches long, were proudly liberated in open waters. That drop in the bucket cost no one knows how much money and how many hours of toil, but the event marked the fact that Wisconsin had finally gotten the hang of doing the trick. The next year about 1,500 were reared; by 1938, 4,500, and in 1941, 135,422 muskies from 9 to 12 inches in length were produced.

Now, a muskalonge will get up to 6 inches in seven weeks, but

it takes a lot of food to get him there. And to raise him to a foot in length takes a whole lot more per inch. Small wonder that Wisconsin's fish-food bill will exceed \$35,000 a year.

The production of muskalonge fingerlings was down to just 100,000 this year, in accordance with wartime retrenchment. But new facilities for growing the fish are ready, and once the hatcheries get the green light the sky probably will be the limit.

If anyone charges that the Wisconsin program is unorthodox and is of the kind being challenged now and again by top-ranking biologists, they'll be told that fishermen keep on reporting better fishing. That, you'll have to admit, is the proof of the pudding!

It wouldn't be right to leave a discussion of Wisconsin conservation without stressing the devices which tend to draw the people of the state close to the Department. We have talked about pheasant rearing and feeding stations, both of them activities which give individuals a sense of belonging to a great movement. We have seen how the bulk of the state's forestry program is rooted in the counties, which means keeping it ever so close to Joe Doakes. But perhaps the framing of fish and game regulations is a bigger factor in stimulating and retaining close contact with folks than either of these.

The Commission itself is a non-partisan body of six, appointed by the Governor, three from the southern part of the state and three from the north. These men select the director. Among their many other obligations is issuing orders on seasons and limits, which go on up for the Governor's signature.

Naturally, the first basis of any regulation is biological information, which the Commission gets from its technicians. Next comes the most important item of how the sportsmen feel about the rules by which their game must be played. So since 1933 the Commission has gone right to the people to sound public opinion and give information as to the why's of it all before orders are formulated.

After a period of experimentation, County Conservation Committees were elected at local mass meetings, local problems threshed out and local opinion crystallized. Then, in July of each

year, the Wisconsin Conservation Congress, made up of county representatives, convenes in Madison for a two-day session. Technicians and administrators detail their attitudes, tell what they advise by way of orders, and then the discussion starts.

As many as 350 delegates will attend this gathering. They have become tremendously earnest about the job; they have begun to function with a great sense of state-wide, as against local, responsibility. Their decisions guide the Commission in issuing its regulations, but their good works do not stop there. They go home loaded with information and spread a better understanding of conservation problems and programs among their neighbors than could be achieved by any other known practical method. It has knit Wisconsin conservation interest and enthusiasm and capacity into a close and durable fabric. It's democracy in the outdoor field at its best.

WYOMING ANTELOPE¹

*Top sport may once more be had on the
Western plains with this fleetest of all our
four-footed game*

By MAJOR ROBERT E. TREMAN

A SEPTEMBER DAWN in Wyoming! The open tent door frames a brilliant starry sky above the blue-black silhouette of distant mountains. Mist lies low over the treeless plains. Horse bells come nearer through the cottonwoods of the bottoms. Lights in the cook tent, aroma of frying bacon, excitement, anticipation, thrills! It is the opening day of the antelope season.

A waning moon slips behind the mountains as we start. Riding forth into the mist produces a thrill akin to that of descending the stairs on a Christmas morning of long ago. What lies beyond? Max, master hunter and veteran guide, has for years looked over this scene. Now his eyes glint with anticipation. Perhaps over there may be that coveted 20-inch horn of the records. Perhaps! We may never see it, but the hope will always thrill. And so men hunt.

For days that thrill was always new as we looked over herd after herd. But the "big one" was not among them. Then there came the morning when, as we rode up along the edge of a deep stream bed, we spotted several small bands. Max stopped suddenly and clapped the glasses to his eyes. I swallowed hard.

"There's our head," I heard Max say, and his voice seemed very far away.

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We booted the horses over the edge of the gully. The minutes dragged while we worked along under this cover the half mile or so that would bring us abreast of the herd. Would the herd still be there?

Leaving the horses in the creek bottom, we cautiously crawled to the top of the bank. That long-developed sixth sense of Max's had brought us to a perfect landing directly opposite a big buck.

"He'll go twenty," Max whispered.

His words gave me the jitters. To stalk seemed almost impossible. There were six hundred yards of practically open terrain between us and the buck, and neither Max nor I knew how he was going to put me within rifle shot. A dude who develops a high fever every time he comes within sight of a record sweep of horns, though he has shot fifty head of big game, is a problem for any guide.

The buck and his five does were feeding slowly to our left. Foot by foot we wriggled through that quarter of a mile, flat on our stomachs, "freezing" every time the antelope looked up. Finally a rise, so low that we could not see it when we started, gave us a break, and we crawled fifty yards on our knees.

Max peered over the crest and beckoned me to come up. There at last I saw the buck of bucks standing against the sky-line, not more than a hundred and fifty yards away. We had made a perfect stalk. It was easy now, or so I thought.

No alarm had been given. There was time to prepare to take the perfect, the infallible shot. No need of shooting from the knee or offhand. I dropped flat to take a prone shot—and found myself so buried in long grass that I couldn't see my sights or the antelope. In a panic lest the buck get away while I couldn't see him, I jumped up and poured the entire magazine on the running herd.

I never cut a whisker on the buck, and I am sure he paused for a second on the crest of the next rise to thumb his nose at me as he disappeared. And so the great stalk ended, without the record head.

"There's plenty more," Max laughed—an amazingly true statement of hunting conditions in Wyoming.

The essayist who said, "There is nothing so constant as change," must, I am sure, have had the fortunes of the hunter in mind. It seemed only minutes later when Max's head went up again, and again the jitters seized me. We were off in a flash. Fortune favored with a better position, I contributed more orthodox shooting, and we stood admiring a beautiful 16-inch head, stretched on the plain. The hunt was ended.

No, I'm wrong; it wasn't ended. In the months since then, I've taken that stalk a hundred times back in my office or evenings in my trophy room. I've smelled bacon on the morning air. I've ridden into morning mists. I've crawled up on the big one again and again. But these things only the hunter may know.

Few species of American mammals can offer such sport to the hunter as that game little animal, the pronghorn antelope. Among all game, there is none that possesses his versatile nature and interesting characteristics. Like the mountain sheep, he is a seer, relying almost entirely on his eyes for defense against his adversaries; but he goes the ram one better.

Both in appearance and in use, those eyes of his are most unusual. There is one at the base of each horn, placed so near the edge of his skull that he can see both ahead of and behind him. His eye is larger than that of cow or horse, nearly as large as that of an elephant; they give him somewhat the appearance of a huge beetle. He can see half or three-quarters of a mile away, with a range of vision keener than that of an 8-power glass.

Though he sees you before you come into range, he'll play the game with you; he'll spot your 8-power glasses against his naked eye, and not go out of bounds. I've seen a herd fairly fly across the plains up to the foot-hills and trees, then scorn the cover they have reached and circle back and back again, as if playing a game of tag with your bullets. The pronghorn is a real sportsman. He runs, but he never hides.

And how he can run! He'll race you, race your horse, race your car. Ernest Thompson Seton estimated his speed at 32 miles per

hour; but on many authenticated occasions he has kept up with a car, doing 55 miles an hour. Tales have been told by engineers in the early days of herds racing with the trains, and actually crossing the track in front of the engine. The antelope runs with a gait all his own, in long stiff-legged bounds, hugging the ground closely. His gait would break the heart of a horse that tried to follow it. The antelope has a perfect running mechanism.

Another peculiar characteristic is the white rump which it shares in common with the bighorn sheep but which has a special quality of its own. The snow-white hair can be raised at will. In that position it reflects the rays of the sun. It is said that herds at a distance are warned by the signal. This "hair-raising" is probably a nervous reaction to alarm, and is recognized instantly by others of the herd as a danger signal.

In moving from place to place, the herd is usually led by a doe. Unlike other animals which have given way before the settler, antelope have never taken to cover. They avoid timber and high sage lands. They dislike water; if they get wet, they will run until they are dry. Because of their highly nervous temperament, they have never survived in captivity, as other species indigenous to North America have done. Yet despite their delicate physical constitution, they will take a lot of punishment and are hard to kill.

Antelope display almost human intelligence in self-defense. My hunting partner, George Walter, witnessed a vivid demonstration of this. As a herd of antelope was feeding along the foot-hills a coyote wandered near them. The antelope immediately made a circle around him, and as the coyote moved, so did the circle, keeping intact and gradually closing in on the coyote until they could stampede him and chisel him to ribbons with their sharp hoofs.

Yet the antelope has two distinctive weaknesses which have cost him heavily: a fatal curiosity and an inability to high-jump. In the old days, Indians chased the herds with relays of fresh horses, ambushed them in their southern migration, and drove them into a corral—perhaps not more than three feet high. Then

they waded in to butcher the animals wholesale. Although the antelope broad-jumps like Jesse Owens, a 3-foot corral fence would be high enough to hold him.

The Indians sometimes decoyed a herd by waving red flannel or buckskin flags from an ambush. Impelled by curiosity, the animals would come nearer and nearer, back away, circle, come closer, and finally approach within range of the black-powder rifles of the early-day plainsmen.

Thus for generations the antelope has been the victim of unfair and unsportsmanlike methods of shooting, right down to automobile "sportsmen" who turned the first open season of the 1920's into a rank butchery. Such methods of hunting brought this grand little animal to the verge of extinction at the turn of the century. In the 70's and 80's there were said to be between forty and sixty millions of them, on a natural range from the Mississippi to the Pacific, except in the mountains and forested lands, and from Mexico to the plains of southern Canada. When the buffalo were butchered out of existence, the attention of hunters was turned to the antelope.

As in the case of the buffalo, however, a few far-sighted and unselfish individuals stepped in to save them. One of these worthy efforts to conserve the species was made by Messrs. Phelps and Belden of the huge Pitchfork Ranch in Wyoming. In 1902 there were but 15 head of antelope on the ranch, but by careful conservation this herd has now increased to 2,000 on the Pitchfork alone. There are now 20,000 head in Wyoming, which offer most enjoyable shooting each fall under wise conservation laws. The national herd now numbers about 50,000; compare this with the 100,000 white-tailed deer in New York State alone.

The antelope is smaller than the white-tailed deer, standing about 3 feet at the withers and measuring 5 feet from nose to tail. His color is rufous yellow, except for his white rump, white belly and legs, and horizontal white stripes across the throat and on the face. He is not related to the deer family; in fact, he has no relation in America, being of one family and one genus. The early explorers called the antelope a "goat." Like the goat he has a gall-

bladder, and a bifurcate hood like the giraffe. The American antelope is not even a true antelope, being more nearly related to the gazelles.

Antelope reach their maturity at five years, and live to about eight. The kids are generally born in pairs, and within a few days can run with the herd. Unlike most mammals, antelope are noisy, making a sound, when alarmed or curious, between a bark and a squeal.

The buck is the only hollow-horned ruminant in the world that sheds his horns. This takes place in the late fall, and varies somewhat in different localities. The outer sheath slips off the inner core as the new horn beneath develops. During the period of shedding, which is after the rut, the antelope range in larger herds for self-protection.

Now, thanks to conservation practices, this grand little game animal is back with us. Let us see that he gets the breaks that he gives us, and remains with us and our boys. He has brought a new kind of hunting to us. Like the mountain sheep, he gives us long, cautious stalks with the added zest of being more sporty about it; he's willing to take a chance and play the game with us. He will give us the long shot that calls for skill. He has brought back the days of the Old West, sport packed with its own peculiar thrills. Let us play fair with him, for the sport he gives us.

And splendid sport it is! In no other shooting that I know of can the hunter be so sure of getting his game. The disappointments come and go so quickly that a miss merely adds zest to the day's work. Certainly there is no sport that, only a few days from New York, pays the same dividends in results and pleasures.

With game all around you, under cloudless skies, great backgrounds of mountains and limitless vistas of plains, it's a hunt you'll always remember. You can take the missis and the kids. And you don't need the wealth of Croesus, a heart of oak, or the skill of Wild Bill Hickok to get by. If you have to consider any or all of these things or even if you don't—there'll be no regrets for the September days you spend in Wyoming.

FROM A SIXTEEN-FOOT BOAT¹

*Thrilling battles with big-game fish
fought from a tiny launch*

By HAMILTON M. WRIGHT

BUT HOW are you going to manage?" said a bystander, looking at our cockle-shell craft. "If a squall blows up while you're out in the Gulf Stream, you'll have to come in. And if you hook into a big fish, he's apt to sink you!"

Nevertheless, I was going to try it. For seven years I had been fishing the Florida reefs and the Gulf Stream, under practically all weather conditions and in every kind of craft, from high-powered launches to those beamy commercial fishing boats capable of standing out a hurricane. I had had sport—plenty of sport—but it always seemed to me that the odds were too much against the fish and that I wasn't getting all he had to give. The boat was too big, the motors were too powerful. It seemed to me that a light boat would even things up a bit. It might be dangerous, but it would certainly be thrilling.

With these thoughts in mind, my friend Eugene and I chugged out into Biscayne Bay one bright February morning, bound for Key West, the reefs and the Gulf Stream. Our boat was 16 feet long and open. She was decked forward for 32 inches, and had a 4-inch coaming above the gunwales, giving her a little advantage in choppy weather. The power consisted of a 1-cylinder 2½-h.p. motor, supplied by a 7-gallon gasoline tank under the forward deck. The little craft was very strongly built of ¾-inch cedar

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strips, 1 inch deep. She took the waves like a duck, and could hang on the side of a big sea like a fly on a wall. Not a boat to play in, to be sure; but shallow enough of draft to go up to any of the keys—a certain guarantee of thrills if we hooked a sailfish in the Gulf Stream or speared a large ray on the shoals. Then, too, we were close to the ocean. In a small boat, it opens up to you like a clear blue crystal, revealing the wonderful life below.

That afternoon, until we managed to make a landing on the northern tip of Key Largo, we weathered the tail end of one of the worst storms of the winter. It had tied up shipping in the North and reached great force even in the Florida keys, drowning two boys who had ventured out to Cape Florida. The *Berengaria*, we later learned, had reached New York forty-eight hours behind time, after buffeting wild seas. In the Caribbean, the cold blasts benumbed countless tropical fishes which were cast ashore and often gathered up by the frugal natives and sold. At Key Largo, about fifty miles south of our starting-point, I saw a jewfish weighing 147 pounds so paralyzed by the drop in temperature that it drifted ashore, to be found and towed to a fish house. There, on the beach, I also picked up a grouper weighing about 6 pounds which was benumbed and threw it into the boat.

The weather being still too heavy outside, we went through one of the channels into the Gulf of Mexico and dropped anchor to still-fish in a channel about a mile offshore. But the fish were not biting. It was too cold. So I baited the grouper to a heavy shark hook with a chain leader, to which was attached three hundred feet of $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch Manila rope, and threw it overboard.

After the rope had payed off for 150 feet down the channel, it started to move swiftly, then tautened, swirling wildly. The boat swerved to port with a sudden list that threw us from our seats. Now the line was pulling from the forward port thwart, but the anchor held. The bow dipped deep, the boat was listing over. In a moment it would be overturned. Leaping to the bow, I cut the anchor line with a fish-knife, and we were off on a wild race.

I knew from the heavy, swerving pull that it was a shark. Thrice in quick succession he almost overturned us, pulling for-

ward and sideways and forcing the boat at a tangent to his course. Eugene then took the tiller. I worked in some slack and attached the rope directly to the bow.

Before we realized it, the shark had pulled us fully three miles from shore, taking our boat much faster than the seven miles an hour that the little motor would drive it. His course was very erratic, with wild, heart-pulling dips, circles and sudden pulls. But at length he began to sulk. Unfortunately, we could not reverse the engine to back against his strength.

Suddenly the line went slack. I took it in, calling to Eugene to start the engine and tow him to the top. In a moment, there he was—right on the surface! The largest leopard shark I have ever seen, and within forty feet of the stern. In an instant he came straight for us, but swirled under the boat. Hurriedly I cleared the line at the bow and let out two hundred feet of slack, for with a taut line he would have rolled us over, bottom side up.

Eugene put the tiller hard over, and when the shark had stretched the line for another long run we were directly behind him, with the line paying out straight from the bow. Now he gave us a free ride for five or six dizzy miles, swirling and twisting like a rum-runner at dusk, and ending up miraculously near the spot where we had hooked him. Again he sulked. He was getting tired. Again I took in the slack. He followed the line, putting up no resistance. A few turns of the engine pulled him to the top, and as he appeared Eugene gave him two shots from the Springfield.

Once again he swirled into the depths, and with terrific speed. The veins in my throat were pulsing. I was covered with sweat. My knees were shaking. I could scarcely hear. But I let out the slack and cleared the line, while Eugene held the boat in his course. The big fish made dashes that threw the spray from the bow. But not for long. The shark is yellow. He won't fight long, but will battle viciously if insane from the presence of blood in the water or if he is cornered and wounded.

I took in the slack line once more, and we tried our former tactics, pulling him to the surface with the movement of the boat.

We could see blood in the water. Eugene emptied his Springfield into him and, standing up in the stern, seized a boat hook.

The shark seemed done for; so I pulled him toward the boat to give him a thrust with the big fish-knife. Suddenly he took on life and came for the boat like a torpedo. *Wham!* He struck us on the port side forward at a slant, raising the little launch almost out of water. The shock toppled Eugene overboard, and the boat careened wildly as he went under. I gave slack as he climbed in again, but the shark never took it up. We had to pull him in. Two more shots from the Springfield, and he was dead as a door-nail. A high-powered rifle soon knocks the stuffing out of a shark, especially if it hits near the spinal cord. This shark lacked about nine inches of the length of the boat. I judged his weight at about 2,000 pounds.

We spent the next day in camp on one of the keys, patching up the boat, and the following morning we started out for the Gulf Stream after sailfish. It was a grand day. The storm now seemed over, and we looked for some real sport.

As we came out of Matecumbe Channel the best course out to the Stream seemed to be to cross Tennessee Reef, which would bring us out in the Gulf Stream opposite Long Key. A swift current carried us out toward this reef; and I soon found, to my consternation, that a heavy sea had arisen, and with the tide churning along at six or seven miles an hour it was almost impossible to turn back. Borne by the swift tide and our own power, we were carried toward the reef at considerable speed. The waves swiftly mounted to huge size.

The reef adjoins the Gulf Stream, which was agitated by tremendously long, high swells as an aftermath of the blow. As the swells approached the reef they piled up into giant combers. In dipping into the hollow behind a great billow, the bow went under, shipping a couple of barrels of water over the forward deck. It required all my vigilance at the tiller to prevent this from occurring again. After that first dip I brought her down into the gullies at a slant.

As we reached the mountainous seas on Tennessee Reef I no-

ticed a small shark near the summit of an oncoming wave and considerably above the level of my head. Despite the tension of steering to escape the dangerous seas, I called Eugene's attention to this marvelous sight. He was amidships bailing, but he saw it in time. Then he shouted to me and pointed. Through the green water I saw the dark forms of enormous sponges on the white sand, eighteen or twenty feet below. The water had shoaled up alarmingly. At the same time I saw ahead a giant comber, fifteen feet in height, racing toward us. Eugene called, "Look out, or we're through!"

On it came, green with a white head, filled with menace and formidable. On all sides we were surrounded by tossing water and whitecaps, but this giant towered above everything else. Our little engine was pushing strong. The great wave was now about eighty feet away, and I saw a short space on its summit where the water was not breaking. I jammed the tiller to port to head for it.

The wave appeared to be alive. It seemed as though our tiny boat could never surmount its colossal bulk. But we started to rise when its top was about forty feet away. We were rising up the huge billow at a side-slant. It rushed on to meet us. The little boat held true. While the white combers roared into futile foam on either side, we slipped through the calm space on the top and tobogganed down the long hill at a sidewise angle of about 35 degrees. Glancing back, I saw the part over which we had passed break into white masses and our trolling spoon tossed into the air.

Shafts of golden sunlight, like fissures of clear ice, penetrated far into the abysses. Nebulous forms flickered beneath the waves under the varying light rays.

Huge jelly-fish from 6 inches to 2 feet or more across, floated beneath the surface. Sometimes I could see them far below, faint, shadowy, hanging in watery space, undisturbed by the motion of the waves. Again, nearer the top, their beautiful patterns showed clearly. Yellow seaweed, possibly borne for thousands of miles on the great ocean current, drifted by, sometimes with tiny crustaceans or fish adhering to its fronds.

A Portuguese man-of-war was washed near the stern of the boat. I could see its two tiny companion fish, with their vertical brown-barred markings, idling securely beneath the poisonous tentacles of their host. From a bigger boat I would have missed completely these two strange little fish. Flying fish jumped up before the bow of our little craft and volplaned before the wind, often on a level with our eyes. Small ballyhoos (balaos), a favorite food of the sailfish, went skittering along on their tails. On the summit of each billow we obtained a far view of the ocean, the smoke of a ship to the north, gulls and frigate birds far away. But between the huge billows we were enclosed as by tall hills.

Suddenly Eugene had a strike. The spray flew, and a big 5-foot barracuda shot out of the blue sea like a gleam of silver. He came right out of the side of a wave, shaking his long snout and twisting his lithe, powerful body into an arc as he leaped above the sea. He made a swift run to the right, fighting hard, and I could feel his pull against our tiny launch.

Eugene was having a hard tussle. He was unable to stand upright or to maintain a secure seat in the rocking craft, and the barracuda was fighting like the very devil. As our boat could make only eight miles an hour, he ran all around us. At that, we could have pulled him aboard, but I didn't want him flopping around inside the boat. So when I saw his back through the green waters, I nodded to Eugene and he cut the line. Our barracuda was gone.

Then we went ten miles farther out to sea. We were eighteen miles from Long Key, outside the lane of steamers traveling up and down the coast. The wind was lessening, and it was barely past 2:00 P.M. Cutting a 10-inch strip from the belly of a barracuda which we had taken earlier in the day, Eugene shaved it down to one-sixteenth of an inch in thickness, an inch in width, and pointed at the end, with the hook going through near the point. We let it trail thirty feet behind the boat, wriggling with the motion of a little wounded fish, which will almost instantly attract a hungry pelagic rover.

A quarter of a mile away I saw a sailfish chasing ballyhoo. I

steered over in that direction. He came after our bait and approached within ten-feet of the boat. He mouthed the bait and dropped it. Then he followed it for fifty feet. Eugene let out thirty feet of line, and we saw him take the bait. The rod tip jerked up; the hook was set, and the line whizzed.

The fish rose from the water in a torrent of spray. We looked up at him, for he was not over thirty feet distant. He seemed to hang there in the air for a moment, at the top of his leap, shaking his huge head in a frenzy of rage and terror in an effort to cast the hook from his mouth. Now he was back in the water again, but only for an instant. A pull of the line brought him up, and he went into a long, low leap, walking the water on the summit of a wave for forty feet and throwing spray in every direction. Then he disappeared and made straight for the coast of Africa.

This gave Eugene a chance to sit down. To stand upright in the swaying boat as it rose on the long, huge swells had been like walking a tight rope. Suddenly, six hundred feet to port, the sailfish leaped. We dipped into a wave hollow, and the line grew slack. Eugene reeled in like mad. Again, two hundred feet to starboard, fully eight hundred feet from his former position, the great fish broke water a fourth time. It seemed that two fish were jumping instead of one. It was forty minutes before we were able to draw him near. But the boat had begun to leak badly, and we decided to let him go. After some maneuvering Eugene grasped his bill and, thrusting a smooth blunt stick down his throat, dislodged the hook.

I believe that a sailfish in good condition can make sixty or seventy miles an hour on a slack line, and I am not the only one holding that belief. He can take out a hundred yards of line in three seconds. He goes as fast as a duck down-wind, as fast as a dolphin, which will gain two to one on a flying-fish.

And then the engine began to miss. It stopped. We cranked it and ran a quarter of a mile. Again it stopped. Water, we thought, in the carburetor. During a perilous and nerve-racking hour one of us tinkered with the engine while the other bailed. It was getting late, and the current was taking us out to sea. I

rigged our pup tent on the boat hook as a sail, and the landward breeze held us against the tide. Half an hour later Eugene turned the engine over. Put-put-put, and we were off!

Several hours later, just as the sun sank like a ball of fire below the horizon, we pulled in at the end of Matecumbe Key. We anchored our grounded boat in eighteen inches of water and waded ashore. A yellow glow guided us to a fisherman's hut.

Three days later, with a couple of new ribs in the boat, we were out in the Gulf Stream again. The weather was fine. The tropical sun shone in all its glory.

At some distance from the boat Eugene made out a great golden yellow splotch in the sea. This I took to be a patch of yellow seaweed. Cruising nearer, we discovered it to be an enormous loggerhead turtle, wider across than our boat. As we were about to pass it sank two feet beneath the surface, glistening like a golden cauldron through the clear water. I could see it, partly covered with barnacles, with a long rounded head larger than a man's.

Everywhere men-of-war cruised before the breeze, transparent blue-green toy balloons leaving little ripples as they caught the wind on the tops of the billows, trailing their long tentacles behind them. Then once more we saw the gold spot on the summit of a wave. Eugene reeled in the sailfish line and got out the spear. We began to circle. The loggerhead sank twice upon our approach. But on our third turn Eugene harpooned him in the neck. He was bigger than we had thought, a 500-pounder, and he took down our heavy shark line for its full length of 150 feet. The sunlight, penetrating the depths in long streaky shafts, illuminated his golden back as he descended. Down, down he went, until he was no larger than a twenty-dollar gold piece flickering uncertainly on the bottom of a deep pool. Then we could see him no longer.

The line whipped the spray with a crack. Our boat tipped dangerously under his great weight. He was pulling the boat, we were lurching, and in the big waves his pull put us in danger of foundering. I shoved the valve, which had been half over, at full

speed to let the engine pull against him. Thus we circled above him with a heavy strain on the line.

Once he came to the top, but we could not prevent him from taking the line out again, and the boat began to keel over as it rose on the side of a wave. He was too much for us. We cut the line—an old expedient when fast to something too big for us. Before we left the place we saw the great turtle again upon the surface, basking in the sunlight as though contemptuous of our presence.

A few days later found us at Bahia Honda, famous commercial fishing grounds in the Gulf of Mexico, where seiners catch hundreds of tons of Spanish mackerel. The Bahia Honda fishing grounds were twenty miles from land. During the fishing season, hundreds of launches and a score of mother-boats carrying ice and supplies present the aspect of a floating city. But now there were no fish. The waves had churned up the marl sediment from the bottom, and the water was almost milk-white; so we ran south for forty miles and found magnificent kingfishing on some crystal-clear reefs seven to twelve feet deep.

Our kingfish ran up to 20 pounds. Like all the mackerel tribe, the kingfish is a sporty fighter. He has a bite like a bulldog; and unless you jerk hard to set the hook, he will hold the leader in his teeth and throw it off. One of the best baits is a hook encrusted with tinfoil or bright lead. Our boat ran at just the right speed for trolling, and we had magnificent sport.

Coming back toward Bahia Honda and near the Florida keys, I saw a white heron on a submerged point. It was near sundown, and his reflection was mirrored in the placid water for hundreds of feet. And not a minute later, as we slipped into a channel leading past this point, a big ray leaped into the air. We turned our course to approach him. The green water in the channel was only five feet deep and raced seaward with a strong tide.

As we neared the spot where the ray had jumped I could see him holding his position against the tide, evidently to catch the small fish borne to him by the current. When we were almost upon him, the great fish, dappled by the sunlight flickering

through the waves, rose to the surface. Eugene threw the harpoon into him, and there was the very devil to pay. He surged into the air, fell back and bumped into the boat as Eugene took up the rifle and filled him with bullets. A very powerful fish, 10 feet across, he fought like a demon, striking the boat repeatedly in his struggles. In spite of my efforts to fend him off with the boat hook and although every time he came to the surface he received a baptism of lead, he surged down the channel, dragging us as the tide carries a chip. But in ten minutes he was dead. We were fast to a 10-foot width of dead fish.

Our boat was leaking badly again and was half filled with water. The adventure with the shark had been too much for cedar strips. We pulled to the shore and pitched camp for the night. The next day we caulked the boat as best we could and made for the nearest fishing camp. We decided our little boat was done for and left her there. She had been shattered too often. Today she lies under an old fish house, resting after her heroic career.

HOUNDS AND THEIR ORIGINS¹

Edited by JOHN HIGHTOWER, FREEMAN LLOYD
AND HORACE LYTLE

IT HAS BEEN ESTIMATED that there are several hundreds of thousands of hounds in the United States, the great majority being owned by individual hunters. As a result, the hound is usually regarded more as a single hunting companion than as the member of a pack. Our ordinary American hound is left to his own nose, and is permitted to follow the trail wherever it may lead, without urge or direction. He is self-reliant, keen-scented, unusually persistent, and full-voiced.

Our hounds are, as a class, generally described as foxhounds; but many are used on wolves, mountain lion, bear and deer. There are also, of course, thousands of beagles or "rabbit dogs," and hosts of 'coon and 'possum hounds. In short, the United States and Canada hold more working hounds than any other land.

American hounds are the results of many mixtures of European hound strains. The heavier-headed and longer-eared hounds seemingly bear more resemblance to continental hounds than to those of Britain.

Joseph B. Thomas relates in his "Hounds and Hunting" that the first mention of hound importations to America appears in a diary of one of De Soto's men, written about 1541. This account stated that the hounds were utilized to hunt Indians, as well as

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game. However, the first record of any practical value is that of a seventeenth-century importation to Maryland.

In 1650 Robert Brooke sailed from London for America, taking with him his pack of hounds. He landed at Della Brooke, twenty miles from the mouth of the Patuxent, in what is now Calvert County, Maryland. It was from this importation that the family of Brooke hounds, which were so famous in Maryland for over two hundred years, originated. These Brooke hounds had material influence as the tap-root of several distinguished strains of American hounds, as may be seen by reference to the letters and stud books of Trigg, Maupin, Wade and Walker. The Brooke hounds remained in the same family for nearly three hundred years; and as late as 1915 several couple of these were in Mr. Thomas' pack. These Brooke hounds were of a light tan color.

Dr. Thomas Walker, of Albemarle County, Virginia, imported hounds from England in 1722. George Washington, who had kept hounds from his youth, was, with British officers and residents of New York, a subscriber to an importation of hounds from England in 1770. Some of these hounds were also kept at Hempstead, Long Island; and it was about that year that the first red foxes were imported and liberated in America.

In August, 1785, Washington received three dog and four bitch hounds from the Marquis de Lafayette of France, and subsequently wrote in his diary:

"Found a fox which was run tolerably well by French bitches and one of Mason's dogs. The other French dogs showed little disposition to follow, and with a second dog of Mason's got upon another fox, which was followed slow and indifferently by some and not at all by the rest, until scent became cold, so cold that it could not be followed at all.

"Three or four French hounds discovered no greater disposition for hunting today than they did on Tuesday last. My French hounds performed better today and have offered hopes of their performing well when they become a little more used to hunting, and understand more fully the kind of game they are intended to run."

From the action of these French hounds, it might be inferred that they had not been entered to fox in the country of their origin, but might have been run on deer.

Mr. Thomas also informs us in his splendid work that French hounds were imported to Louisiana, probably in the seventeenth century. These hounds were of the Normandy breed. They were big, with high occiputs, and were long-eared, rat-tailed, and were known locally as "porcelaines," on account of their white color with tan markings. From Louisiana, some of these Normandy hounds were taken to Texas, and their descendants are to be found there today.

Undoubtedly the most famous strain of hounds in this country today is the Walker. John J. Walker of Kentucky was its founder. General G. W. Maupin, for whom the Maupin hound was named, was a neighbor and close personal friend of John Walker. In 1857 General Maupin imported a hound from Tennessee, Tennessee Lead, and bred this dog to previous importations from England. It is this strain which is today known as the "Walker hound."

The famous Trigg hounds of Kentucky are descendants of Irish hounds. About 1860 Haiden C. Trigg acquired some hounds from George L. F. Birdsong of Georgia, and the Birdsong, or July, hounds of Georgia resulted from a cross between Dr. Henry's Irish hounds and a dog named July, which came from Maryland. These hounds probably had a considerable infusion of greyhound blood.

Other famous hound strains are: Robinson—originated when B. F. Robinson of Kentucky brought a number of Irish hounds from Maryland, and crossed them with his native pack; Henry—bred by Dr. Thomas Henry of Virginia; Buckfield—bred in the vicinity of Buckfield, Maine; Wild Goose—dating back to 1835, when C. S. Lewis and John Fuquay crossed their packs and later introduced Irish and English blood; Arkansas Travellers—which came from Missouri, as did many of the earlier hounds of Louisiana; Pennsylvania—which were of two general types and came from Maryland and Virginia; and Goodman, Whitlock, Pooler

and Williams—strains descended from the Robinson-Maupin-Walker combinations, and with little, if any, crosses of outside blood.

Perhaps the most powerful hound of all is the Plott, a heavy-set dog, mostly used for bear and wild boar. A brindle color is noticeable in the strain, which may or may not point to distant Great Dane or German boarhound blood.

Yes, the American hound is not only a hound of many colors, but a diligent, long-lasting hunter into whose bloodlines has gone the heritage of many famous strains. As long as there is hunting, the American hound will exist. And that means forever and a day!

WADING IS AN ART¹

*Learning to navigate hard, twisting flows
of heavy water requires poise, coordination
and physical strength*

By LEE WULFF

IF THERE IS a red god who would grant to each angler at the beginning of his career a choice of excellence in any one of the many requirements, I think the stream fishermen who chose to excel at wading would be very wise in their decisions. In order to carry out that grant, it might be necessary to alter the physical make-up of some of these beneficiaries; but when the ability to wade had been achieved, the problem of well-filled creels would become much simpler.

Wading is not an end to all problems of stream fishing, but it goes a long way in that direction. The truly proficient wader can reach certain fish that his less capable companions must pass up, and because those difficult-to-reach fish are less fished-for than the average they usually rise more often. He can reach the right position for properly presenting a fly to a feeding fish in more cases than a less gifted fisherman. On an average, an excellent wader should take at least 20 per cent more fish than an equally good fisherman in all other respects who is just an average wader.

The old axiom, "You can't catch fish unless your line is in the water," holds good in the case of waders as well as others. The angler who is sure of himself as he moves over a slippery, uneven

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stream-bed will be able to cast more steadily and will lose less fishing time than the man who must stop casting to concentrate on not falling and getting wet at every ticklish stretch of water.

The angler who is at home in the deep water or swift flows can, if he wishes to travel slowly and with infinite care, spy at close range on the fish he seeks to take, learning much that will evade the less accomplished wader. By actual wading, more than in any other way, a fisherman can learn to read the surface of a stream and tell by the ripples, swirls and eddies the type of flow and contour of the bottom below it.

Wading the still waters with the care required to keep down all ripples and make no sudden moves that might alarm the fish demands little physical stamina, but a wealth of poise and restraint. But wading the hard, twisting flows of heavy water over an uneven bed requires not only poise and restraint, but physical strength, coordination and daring as well. Whether or not perfect wading is an art, it is certainly something which few anglers attain, though many attempt it.

From the purely physical viewpoint, it is obvious that a heavy man's weight will allow him to hold his position more securely than a light one of the same ability. Weight, however, must be governed by the agility and strength necessary to control it best.

The ideal wader is heavy, but not too heavy. He has weight within the limits of great strength. Secondly, the tall, long-legged man can wade deeper than a short one. He finds it easier to step over obstacles, and the tops of his waders are farther above his feet. Thirdly, a man whose weight is high on his body has an advantage over one whose weight is evenly distributed or concentrated below the waist. Weight under water loses its power to hold the angler in a fixed spot, but weight above it maintains that power. The less weight and bulk one has below the water-line, the less resistance it will offer to the water flowing past, and the easier it will be to maintain a position or work upstream against a strong flow. Thus we find that the man best fitted for wading is a tall, narrow-hipped, broad-shouldered athlete of average or more than average weight.

Having established the ideal figure, it remains for those having less-than-perfect wading physiques to allow for any lack in physical advantages and be prepared to do the best they can with what they have. They must realize that, no matter how good they become, if they haven't a perfect body for wading, someone just as smart who does have is likely to come along and make them look like a barefoot school kid in a park fountain.

Sure-footedness is the first requirement for a good wader. When an angler's feet go down on the stream-bed, they should be prepared to hold their position if desirable or to shift the instant a loose rock starts rolling beneath them, ready to give way gracefully when they slip while they seek a solid surface to brace on. No wader is immune from the danger of rolling rocks, smooth-slick surfaces and sudden deep spots, but quick reactions can save a good wader from a fall or a wetting ninety-nine times out of a hundred.

Balance is the next requirement. Can you stand on one foot in a tough spot long enough to extricate the other foot and plant it where it will do its share of holding a ticklish position? Balance in wading is not like balance ashore. When a wader starts to fall, he can lean against a strong, steady current, or even against the yielding solidity of a still pool, and it will support him long enough to allow him to regain his footing. A man sinks slowly when he slips, and if his wits stay with him and his reactions are quick enough a good sense of balance will keep his wader tops above the water.

To digress a moment at the mention of waders, it is worthy of mention that waders are no aid to wading, merely to comfort. I had learned most of what I know about wading before I ever saw a pair by wading wet, in sneakers—the hard, cold way. The heavier and stiffer the waders are, the more they deter swift, sure action; but waders keep you dry.

Strength is another factor in wading. Strength is wasted when a man can't use it with speed, but quick strength is desirable up to the greatest point it can be controlled. If a wader can jump six feet from a one-footed stand in eighteen inches of fast water, he

has an advantage over the man who can't. When it comes to bucking a stiff flow of water, there is no substitute for strength, and the man who lacks it isn't as good as the man who has it, all other abilities being equal.

Daring is essential in a top-notch wader. The stream fisherman who will only dare what he has seen done before will never be really good. In the back of an expert wader's mind are a thousand imagined situations, each tentatively answered by his own mental solution. When one of these new situations develops with the speed of a winking eyelash, his subconscious reflex must be relied on to carry him through, and if his thinking has been straight it is almost certain to do just that.

The final essential quality and the hardest to obtain is wading knowledge. Can you read the contours of the river beds by the surface water? Can you utilize the lower currents and eddies when you toil upstream against a difficult flow? Can you wade confidently in dark brown or muddy water through which you can't see bottom? Can you move quietly in difficult water without raising a ripple, traveling slowly but surely, with no quick movements to frighten near-by fish? If you can't, there's much for you to learn that nothing but experience can teach you.

The angler who wades to get the most out of his fishing days will know his favorite stream-bed like a book. By wading the deep pools under low-water conditions he will discover the bars and ledges that carry him through many of the same pools in normal flow and allow him to reach fish beyond the range of other equally able anglers who haven't had a chance to learn the stream's best wading paths.

In a settled stream such knowledge is good for a lifetime, but in many rivers the freshets that arrive with every spring will change some of the pools and runs. There may be a wetting in store now and then in the early season, when the gravel bar that used to carry a man along with his wader tops two inches above the water has been scoured down by four inches and the current is too strong to go back after that realization comes. But such wettings are rare and a small price to pay for the advantages of

knowing a stream-bed well and using that knowledge to the fullest extent.

When a river is high and strong, the pools that could normally be waded upstream must often be fished downstream with a wet fly. It takes confidence in your own judgment to start in at the top of a pool, knowing that there is no turning back once you start and that the bar you intend to follow may have been washed downstream since you last waded through. Without that confidence and the willingness to take the risk, you will never learn how seldom the bottom really changes enough to give you a wetting without giving away the secret by some change in surface flow.

In the matter of wading equipment, boots and rubber-soled shoes are poor grippers, and anglers using them are limited to those spots where the contours of the bottom will give them a good resisting surface. Hobnails and felt are the two best gripping soles. They are about equally good.

On soft, slippery, mossy rocks, hobnails will dig in and hold, where felt soles would slide; but on granite or any other hard, smooth rocks hobnails will slide like an otter and felt soles cling like glue. Take your choice. Mine is felt, because if my foot comes down on a loose coil of line with felt soles nothing happens; but if the foot is hobnailed, I may need a new line.

Wading techniques vary with each river. Sometimes the best course is to slide along the bottom carefully, digging your feet into the jagged creases of an all-rock bottom where too much speed may project you out on a sheet of rock that offers no hold whatsoever. With a gravel bottom of many loose stones the wader may work best by traveling lightly over the rocks, settling his weight on them by degrees to determine whether they will roll. Sand and mud present another problem.

The most spectacular of all is the leaping technique, which carries an angler by a series of standing broad jumps from one submerged rock to another, across the channels that are over his depth. To leap from a submerged rock and land on another without slipping into the deeper water all around it cannot be learned

in a day. Nothing but the sight of such a performance can bring the true realization of the possibilities of this type of wading. It requires eyes like a hawk, sure-footedness and daring.

The danger of falling is always with the wader; but, like an ironworker who walks nonchalantly along a narrow girder hundreds of feet in the air, the wader can learn that, once he forgets the fear of slipping, he can do anything in midstream that he can do in two inches of water at the shore-line and with the same degree of safety. When the fear of losing his balance beyond recovery leaves an angler, he enters the stage where his real wading talents are free to develop.

The ability to recover balance, like all the other wading capabilities, is made up of more tricks than can be covered in any one article on the subject. One of the simplest stunts when losing balance in water over your knees is to jump as high as your less-than-normal footing will allow, draw your feet in under you, and come down as nearly upright as possible. The water will buoy you up momentarily and allow your feet to feel for footing that will hold you upright or give you forward motion and a chance to get your feet beneath your weight.

Jumping downstream permits the current to add to the ground you cover if the bottom is slick and increases the chance of striking a projecting ledge. Falling upstream will give you greater buoyancy when you first strike the water—if that is your greatest need. With one foot anchored solidly, the force of a good current on that broad beam of yours will almost lift you to your feet again.

One thing to quit worrying about is that oft-repeated bugaboo: "If you fall in with waders on, the air in them will be unable to get out and will hold your feet up while your head stays under water, and you'll drown." If you stand in water up to your knees, much of the air is driven out of your waders by the force of the water. As you fall more will be pushed out, until practically none remains. If you are wading at hip-depth when you fall, it is impossible to get any air into your waders as you go down, no matter how hard you try.

To prove the danger of the wader-balloon theory, the angler

must do a swan dive from a cliff, and that, I maintain, is not wading. The chief danger to a wader in bad water lies in being swept from his feet and injured by striking a rock or similar obstruction, thus losing control of his body.

I haven't mentioned wading staffs because I've never used one. Maybe they are worth the nuisance of carrying them around. They will hold you in spots where nothing else will; but they detract from the free use of hands and arms, and that is a hindrance to wading. Perhaps, when age begins to tell on me, I'll try one. Meanwhile I go blithely on and wish you "Happy landings!" If wading isn't an art, at least it's mighty close to it.

RUNNING BUFF¹

*One of the last of the old hunters throws
a new light on the slaughter of the buffalo*

As told to
CHARLES B. ROTH

by
FRANK H. MAYER

UNTIL a few weeks ago I was sure that my days as a buffalo hunter were things of the past. I did not think that I would ever recall, publicly at least, those nine years of my life. But I was mistaken, and I am recalling them now because I feel that I must. I do this as much in defense of the buffalo as of the buffalo hunter. Both have been misunderstood and maligned.

Do I mean by this that the story has not been told correctly? Something like that. Recently I picked up a famous magazine. In it was a long story about buffalo hunting. I read this story eagerly and expectantly. But I was disappointed and distressed, for there were only two facts in the whole article: namely, that at one time in its history the American continent sheltered an animal known as the buffalo, and that he was hunted for his hide by the white man. The rest was plain falsity. This same falsity I have found in other articles and in books upon the subject. Can it be possible that history so near to us as this, only fifty or sixty years removed, is so misunderstood and distorted?

I followed buffalo hunting as a career longer than most men did—I was at it for nearly ten years. Except for the far northern

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range, I was on every buffalo ground in America, knew practically every hunter of note on the plains, and had about every experience in hunting buffalo that could come to a man. So when I recount what happened to me, you can get a picture of what happened to others and thus what buffalo hunting really was like—not what someone imagines it was like. Only a few of us hunters are left, probably not a hundred.

I am not going to tell these recollections in the form of a rebuttal to what benighted writers have foisted on the public. I'm too old for that—eighty-three last May. I haven't time for debates. I am going to tell the story of the buffalo days as I lived them, and let it go at that.

Many times I have been asked if I am proud of my participation in the slaughter of the buffalo. I am neither proud nor ashamed. As we look back and see it from a distance the slaughter of the buffalo was a shameless, a needless thing. But it was also as inevitable as the spring floods of the Big Muddy. It had to come.

The buffalo served his mission, fulfilled his destiny in the history of the Indian by furnishing everything he needed—food, clothing, a home, traditions, even a theology. But the buffalo didn't fit in so well with the white man's encroaching civilization—didn't fit at all, in fact. He could not be controlled or domesticated, and he couldn't be corralled behind wire fences. He just didn't fit. So he had to go.

But you may say that this reason is not enough to justify slaughter. Wait. There is another. And you will understand it better when I tell you that the buffalo was hunted and killed with the connivance and the cooperation of the Government itself. This will be denied. But I weigh my words as I set them down.

Do not understand by this that any official action was taken in Washington ordering the destruction of the buffalo. Nothing like that happened. What did happen was that Army officers in charge of plains operations encouraged the slaughter of the buffalo in every possible way. Part of this encouragement was of a very practical nature. We appreciated it, we hunters. It consisted of free ammunition—all you could use, all you wanted, more than

you needed. A buffalo hunter simply had to apply at a frontier Army post and say he was short of ammunition, and it would be given bountifully to him. I received thousands of rounds in this way, and killed thousands of buffalo with these cartridges.

The theory behind all this? It was better explained by a very high-ranking officer in plains service than I can explain it now. I was visiting this man in his office one day. The object of my visit was free ammunition. I got it. Afterward we smoked and talked. He said to me:

"Mayer, either the buffalo or the Indian must go. There is no other way. Only when the Indian becomes absolutely dependent upon us for his every need will we be able to handle him. It seems easier and more humane to kill the buffalo to extinction than the Indian. The buffalo must go."

With that attitude on the part of the authorities, plus the belief that in buffalo hunting there were thousands of dollars of easy money, plus the mistaken conclusion that buffalo hunting was a romantic, a glamorous, an adventuresome, a delightful life, do you wonder that young men went into it?

I realized that the end of the buffalo was imminent. So I resolved to get my share while the getting was good. I went into the business right, investing every last cent I owned in an outfit. I have no apologies to make now for my part in this phase of Western history. I liked the old days better than the new. But the old couldn't last. It was evolution, which is usually cruel but sure.

It has been sixty-one years almost to the day since I set my first trigger on a buffalo. I remember the day so exactly because it was my birthday. I was just twenty-two.

Having left Mexico in a hurry for reasons that have nothing to do with buffalo hunting, I became restive and started looking for a new vocation. Around San Antonio, Texas, were men fresh from the range. I talked with them. The stories they told of the profit, of the fun, of the adventure in buffalo hunting were enough to arouse envy in any man. I fell. I determined to become a buffalo hunter—only we never called ourselves or one another hunters. We were always runners. "So and so is running on the Brazos."

"What are you doing now?" "I'm running buff." "Pat Garret is a buffalo runner this season." The reason for this appellation I cannot explain.

I was very young, very green, in those days, and I listened believingly to a long-haired old fellow in one of the saloons. He wanted to become my guide. I hired him. My other preparations were simple. I borrowed a .50-70 Sharps carbine, Army issue, and hired a wagon outfit. And my days as a buffalo runner had formally begun. This was in May, 1872.

Buffalo running as a business had just got its start. All over the plains, from Texas to Canada, buffalo were plentiful. There were millions upon millions of them. We hadn't gone very far until we saw our first victim—an old bull just crawling out of a wallow where he had been taking his mud bath. I stalked to within 200 yards, aimed at the butt of his neck as he stood broadside, fired. Down he went. It was as easy as that. Adventurous? No more than shooting a tame beef critter in the barnyard. And in nine years of hunting on every range I never found a particle more of adventure in killing buffalo than I found that first morning on the Red River, in what is now Oklahoma.

Part of my guide's business was to skin the kill. I told him to get busy. But he was more adept with excuses than with a skinning-knife, and it took him half a day to pelt the old bull. How ecstatic I was in those days! I drove right back to Waco, the nearest town, and had the head mounted and the hide tanned and sent them to my father. The mounting, tanning and shipping cost \$30, more money than I had. To meet the deficit my watch went into pawn. And for three long weeks I lived on the meat of that tough old buff. Do you wonder that I never again touched a piece of buffalo meat, unless forced by starvation to do so?

Where were the fun, the adventure, the profits in that life? I hadn't found them, and it is likely that I never would have hunted buffalo again if Bob McRae hadn't accidentally come into my life.

Bob McRae, Brazos Bob as we called him, was a buffalo runner, one of the first in the game. In my opinion he was the greatest

of all buffalo runners. Bob had just come in from a successful trip when I met him. He laughed at my experience. "You come along with me next trip, kid. I'll show you how it's done."

I went.

On that trip we skinned out 198 hides and sold them for \$3 each. Bob generously insisted that I take my share of the boodle, one-fifth of the total. It looked like easy money. We had a brush with the Comanches on that trip, a hair-raising Indian adventure in which I won my spurs as a plainsman, and I came back to town surging with enthusiasm for buffalo running. In a Philadelphia bank I had \$2,600. I sent for it. And a few months later I was on the plains with my own outfit.

This was in the winter of 1872. During the next three years I followed running and nothing else for my livelihood. When the cream of the buffalo business was skimmed, I had to resort to other forms of hunting; but it was not until 1881 that I got out of running for good.

In 1872 the whole Western country was buffalo-wild. It was like a gold rush. Men left jobs, homes and future prospects to go into running. They invested lifetime savings in wagons, camp equipment, rifles and cartridges. I needn't talk. I did it. And why not? There were uncounted millions of the beasts—hundreds of millions, it was said. Their hides were worth \$2 to \$3. And they were yours for the taking.

Most of the runners were Western men, young in years but old in plains experience. Among them were a few older men. In the beginning these men made the better showing; they knew how. But in time we youngsters learned the ropes. And when the vast army of runners learned the killing trade, the buffalo was doomed. In three short years they were practically wiped from the earth.

Runners worked alone or in partnership. An outfit cost from \$1,000 to \$10,000. I wanted no partner, but hired three men to work for me—two skinners and a cook. Later I occasionally had an extra skinner, so that my outfit numbered five men. It was never larger.

In most outfits the spoils were divided two ways—the killer

taking one-half as his share, the other half going among skimmers, drivers, cooks and roustabouts, no matter how many they were. It didn't seem fair. I told my boys at the start that we would split our profits more equally. This was good business. My men stayed with me through thick and thin. In all my running years I had the same crew—Baptiste and Jean and Antoine, French-Canadian voyageurs, as skimmers, and Augustin, a negro, as cook and driver. All were good men—brave, dependable, willing. We worked together in harmony. What there was in the way of profit or hardship or excitement or danger we shared fairly. On account of my investment I kept one-fourth of the profits, turning the rest over to the boys for equal division among them.

A buffalo outfit was simple. Horses or mules, wagons, camp equipment and firearms—these were all a man needed to go into the business.

My two wagons I ordered from St. Joseph. The big one, drawn by twelve mules, we used in hauling hides to market; the small one, drawn by six mules, was our camp wagon. Both were equipped with 9-inch-tread flat iron wheels and steel boxes of $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch steel. For the big one I recall I paid \$650; for the small, \$400.

A good buffalo horse was worth what you could get for him—anywhere from \$250 to \$500. We used American horses because they were larger and could outrun Indian ponies. I took much pains with my buffalo horses, teaching them to lie flat while I was shooting my game, so as to avoid detection by roving Indians.

I will not take the time to describe the camp equipment. We bought the best in beds, tents, appurtenances of all kinds. They cost a lot of money.

But when I come to guns I will linger, because I know that you will be more interested in this detail than in any other.

Shooting buffalo presented a different problem from any other shooting of that day. It was all long-range work. The animals were vital, tough, hard to kill. Since the hunting was for profit, the shooter had to have one-shot kills and no wounded game.

All kinds and calibers of rifles were used, from flint-lock mus-

kets to Army fusils. But the man who made running a business needed something better than nondescript rifles. He needed an arm made expressly for his business. He demanded it. And soon it appeared.

The two best buffalo rifles, which were the choice of practically all the good runners, were the Remington and the Sharps. I think the Sharps was the better of the two, but many preferred the Remington.

McRae was a Remington man, and in his hands the old Remingtons were bad medicine for buffalo. His rifles were mounted with Malcolm 10-power telescopes with plain cross-hairs, and with this outfit he was the greatest rifle shot at game that I have ever seen. The Remington came in two popular buffalo calibers—.44-77-390 and .44-90-400. They were dependable, powerful, accurate, those old Rems, and to this day in some of our Western mountains you can find them still in use, still giving good service.

But I never owned one. I was partial to the Sharps because it used the straight shell, which was better than the bottle-necked Remington cartridges. These bottle-necked cases were sure to swell and stick and give you trouble, while straight shells never did. So for my first buffalo rifle I bought a Sharps, and used a Sharps right on through the buffalo days.

I bought my first Sharps from Colonel Richard Irving Dodge. There was a man! Fine sportsman, military leader, expert rifleman, skilled hunter, gentleman—to me Colonel Dodge typified everything that is best in the soldiery of the United States.

The Colonel had several Sharps, and I had none; so I set out to convince him that he should sell one of his to me. The rifle I selected was a .40-90-320, straight shell. It was a beautiful piece, with its imported walnut stock and shiny 32-inch barrel. At \$125 I considered it a bargain. This Sharps weighed 12 pounds. On the barrel I mounted a full-length 1-inch tube telescope, made by A. Vollmer of Jena, Germany. Originally the scope, which was a 20-power, came with plain cross-hairs. These I supplemented with upper and lower stadia hairs, so set that they would cover a vertical space of 30 inches at 200 yards.

With my .40-90 I could kill the toughest buffalo bull that ever followed a trail—kill him with the first shot if I hit him in neck or heart. I did it many times, and never had one get to his feet, no matter how great the range, if properly hit.

As soon as I found that the 320-grain bullet was not so effective as one weighing 420 grains, I discarded the lighter missile for good. I sacrificed nothing in making this change, for I began using fine English powder, which was then from 10 to 30 per cent more efficient than best American makes. Whenever I could get it, my choice in powders was either Curtis & Harvey, or Pigou, Laurence and Wilkes FG. For velocity, energy and accuracy they had no equal. They burned moister than American powders, which facilitated cleaning the barrel.

After a year or so, having plenty of buffalo dollars in my jeans, I decided I needed an extra rifle in reserve—so I bought two, both Sharps. One was a .40-70-320, and the other was a .40-90-420; both shot bottle-necked cartridges. I paid \$100 for the .40-70, and \$115 for the heavier rifle. These were current prices for Sharps at the height of the running years, although later they declined in price, and I saw them in John Lower's gun shop in Denver at \$35, \$40 and \$50—the same guns we runners had paid \$100 for. Both my new rifles were good guns, but I soon discarded them when the bottle-necked cartridges started giving me trouble.

And then, believing that I needed more killing power, I decided that I simply had to have one of the new .45-120-550 Sharps, the "Sharps Buffalo." This was the most powerful of all the Sharps. On the barrel it was stamped "Special Old Reliable," but on the range we knew it as the "Sharps Buffalo" or the "Buffalo Sharps."

The Sharps Buffalo was never in common use. I have been told that only 2,000 were ever made. Since they came in at the heel of the running years, the market was limited, and there was also a price barrier that kept all but the more opulent runners from buying them. I paid \$237.60 for mine, a specially made rifle equipped with a 20-power scope. But it was a rifle!

Many riflemen of the present make light of our old large-bore

rifles and call them unkindly names. Let them talk. With our old Sharps or Remingtons we killed game as easily, at as great ranges and as surely as it is being killed now. How those old guns did shoot! I own, or have owned, every type of American rifle made from 1872 to 1932; and if my life depended upon just one shot and I had a choice of the rifle from which to fire that shot, I know what my choice would be: the Buffalo Sharps. It is the deadliest weapon at any range up to 1,000 yards ever made in America.

When I changed from the .40 to the .45 I wanted more range, more power, more shock. I got what I was looking for and was satisfied. In accuracy the two rifles were about the same, but velocity was naturally in favor of the lighter bullet. Ballistically there was less difference—on paper—than you might think. Here are some figures:

<i>Caliber</i>	<i>Weight of Bullet</i>	<i>Velocity</i>	<i>Muzzle Energy</i>
.40-90-420	420-gr.	1,500 ft.	2,097 lbs.
.45-120-550	550-gr.	1,400 ft.	2,394 lbs.

You can see from these figures that in going to the larger Sharps I didn't gain much—that is, on paper. In the field it seemed to me as if the .45 hit them nearly half again as hard. Explain it, can you? I never could. But it seemed so, at any rate. The animals went down faster, the range was greater, and in the face of directly opposing winds the .45 was noticeably more accurate and effective. There are more queer things in ballistics of actual practice than mathematical theorists ever dream of.

In accuracy, either of these old rifles was the equal of any other rifle I have ever fired—and I have fired them all. Their accuracy was positively uncanny. Stories I might tell would bring this out. But you might not believe the stories; so I shall not tell them.

Most of our shooting at buffalo, as I've said, was at 300 yards or beyond. Yet at 300 yards we could shoot all day long and score 100 per cent results. Accurate? I should say so. Deadly?

Well, we figured one buffalo to one cartridge. I once took 269 hides with 300 cartridges. This was business with us, not sport. We had no time to experiment or theorize.

Since my Sharps Buffalo weighed over 16 pounds, I had to shoot from rest sticks. I devised a set that was a part of the rifle—two steel rods fastened underneath the barrel. Most runners used plain crossed sticks.

There's a mistaken idea that all our shooting was from prone. Very little of it was. Mostly we shot from a kneeling or a sitting position, because the report of a heavy rifle fired close to the ground carries much farther than when fired two feet above it.

The Sharps used paper-patched bullets, but paper on the buffalo range was rare. We had to devise a substitute, and we did—patches of antelope kidskin. I loaded my own cartridges, not because I liked to but because loaded ammunition cost us 25 cents apiece. Even hand loads represented $12\frac{1}{2}$ cents each. We didn't waste many. The best bullet combination was what we called the "16-to-1," which was 16 parts of lead to 1 of tin.

There was one more item of personal equipment before we were ready to go out after game. We did not dare to leave camp without it—it was as important to us as a rifle. This was the poison tube.

I still have the one I carried all through my buffalo years, and the other day I showed it to a man who is supposed to be away up in Western lore. He had never seen anything like it before. That's queer. We all carried them and made no secret of it.

The purpose of the poison tube was to protect us against capture by Indians. We knew what Indian capture meant. And every man of us resolved that he would die by his own hand before he would be taken prisoner. The poison tube was for our self-destruction should escape become impossible. In Western literature there's a lot of twaddle about saving the last cartridge for oneself. How could a man, in the heat of battle, know when he came to his last cartridge? And how did he know that the last cartridge or the last load in his cap-and-ball revolver was going to fire? No, the poison tube was better. It never failed.

Although the use of the tube became almost universal on the range, it was my own invention. I took two empty Sharps shells, one a .45, the other a .40. The smaller shell fitted nicely inside the larger. I had a thin glass tube made, just the inside diameter of the .40 case, filled it with deadly hydrocyanic acid and hermetically sealed it in. The idea was that when cornered you could withdraw the tube from its protecting shell, place it between your teeth and bite. That would be the end. Death would be instantaneous and painless.

I never had to "bite the bite," as we used to say. Others were not so fortunate. Two of their un mutilated bodies I myself discovered. An Indian, you know, won't touch the body of a suicide; it's against his religious beliefs.

Most of us runners had no romantic ideas about our calling. Frankly, we were in it for what we could get out of it. And any man could sit down with pencil and paper and show you how he was going to earn thousands of dollars in just a few months. But the thousands had a miraculous way of dwindling, then disappearing altogether; and if the runner finished the season without a lot of debts, he was lucky.

I've read some amusing accounts about all the money we made—\$5,000, \$10,000, \$20,000 a year. Let me tell you something: all those large incomes were earned on paper after the buffalo had been extinct for forty years. I know. Though I was counted to be one of the five most successful runners, my own income was so small that I am almost ashamed to admit it.

Actually, I averaged just a little over \$100 a month for the years I was a runner. Think of that—a hundred a month for the work we did, for the hardships we endured, for the risks we took. But here are figures which I have just copied from my original diaries:

During 1872 and 1873, my first two years, I grossed \$6,000. Not bad. But out of that must come all expenses, interest on investment and depreciation. What was left was not much. My big year was 1874. That year my earnings totaled \$5,435—gross, you understand. When I had deducted expenses, I had only \$3,124

left for a whole year's work. That isn't so much when you have to starve, freeze and be always fighting for your life to get it. My records show that I earned the \$5,435 gross by selling \$3,020 worth of hides, \$1,260 of buffalo meat, \$905 of tongues and \$250 of specimen heads.

Since the buffalo days I've talked with dozens of runners about how much they made. We have talked frankly, since we were no longer in competition and expected to lie. Without exception they have told me that I did better than they. And I earned \$100 a month!

Why didn't we earn more, with all those buffalo to shoot? You figure it out for yourself. We got from \$2.25 to \$3.50 for hides, averaging say \$2.75. But this had to be cut several ways, and all expenses had to be taken out—expenses were high. Then about half the hides spoiled before we could sell them. Sometimes only one hide in four would go to market. Careless handling, theft, wet weather which mildewed the hides and other forms of spoilage all took toll. Even with the care I gave my business, I lost from 20 to 30 per cent of my hides.

II

There were two ways of hunting the buffalo. One of these was the professional way, the way we runners who were in it for the money followed, while the other was the sporting way. The first we called the "stand method" and the second the "running method." And I think their names describe them.

To understand why the stand method worked so well you ought to know something about buffalo habits. The buffalo was a very stupid animal, the most helpless of our game animals. Nature provided him with almost no protective equipment. His eyesight was poor, his hearing not much better, his scent faulty. He had the disposition, quoting Stevenson, "of a tame sheep," and he could not or would not fight. The pictures you see of wounded buffalo turned on the hunter are pure bunk. The buffalo's one idea of protecting himself was to run, run, run. And he did it at

the slightest provocation, even when there was no provocation at all.

You may have read of buffalo stampedes. Almost anything could start one. I have seen an old cow, placidly grazing, suddenly take it into her head that she was afraid of something. She would start to run. Immediately several thousand other buffalo would be running with her—they didn't know why; they didn't know where.

Along with defenselessness the buffalo had a peculiar herd instinct that made it easy, for a man who knew how, to slay him. Do you remember reading about buffalo herds millions strong, under the leadership of a fine, gallant, courageous bull? I hope you didn't believe it. No buffalo herd ever numbered over 200 animals, and a herd usually contained a good many less, usually from 3 to 50 or 60 head.

In these small herds the buffalo traveled and fed, scattered over the plains, but each one separate and apart from the other herds. Whenever they stampeded, they came together and were, while the stampede lasted, one vast, solid herd. But they would separate when the fright passed into their peculiar herd groups.

Keep in mind those small herds. They were important in hunting; in fact, they formed the basis of our attack. At the head of each herd was its leader. But this leader wasn't a courageous bull, ready to whip the universe. It was not a bull at all, but a wise old cow.

A white man once studied buffalo habits and conceived the idea of hunting the beasts by the herd and not by the individual. Knowing that the herd kept together at all times, he figured that a man who concealed himself within rifle shot could kill the entire bunch, then go on to the next, then to the next, and so on. Simple, wasn't it? And it was just as deadly on the plains as in camp-fire theory. All a man needed to know was how to work the herds, and he was sure of almost perfect results.

So what we did was to single out our herd, conceal ourselves 200 or 300 yards away, and commence shooting. It wasn't hard.

Some writers have said that we selected our first victim and

shot him dead. We did nothing of the kind. We purposely wounded the first animal, the leader if we could spot her, by a lung shot. We knew buffalo habits; knew that the remaining members of the herd, smelling blood, would lose their heads completely. That is what happened. Instead of running they would begin what we called "milling." They would nervously smell the wounded animal, then hook her with their horns, then smell her again, bewildered, not knowing what to do or which way to go. And from our concealment we shot them down deliberately, one right after another. Sporting? I guess not. There never was any sport, thrill nor adventure in shooting buffalo.

When animals were plentiful, we shot only cows. Their hides brought twice as much as the hides of bulls, which were thicker, coarser, heavier and unevenly haired. Later on, when buff became scarce, we took them as they came, and were glad to get bulls, cows, heifers or calves. The summer kills—animals we took in June, July, August—were short-haired and best for clothing, tents and bags. Winter kills were used for bedding and overcoats. The robe skins were those of heifers which had been taken in late fall or early winter.

The particular prize of runners was a hide known as a "silk." Such hides had very long, silky, soft hair. They were so rare that in handling thousands of hides I counted only 90-odd silks.

Whenever a runner was lucky enough to get a silk, he made the buyer pay plenty for it. Silks were worth from five to ten times what ordinary hides were. I sold many for as much as \$50.

I have worked hundreds of stands by the methods I have just described, without losing a single animal I wanted. Only when I crawled too close, to within 200 yards or less, did I fail. Then the heavy report of my Sharps would sometimes wake up the survivors, and they would stampede, and on such occasions, as Mark Twain said, a deaf person could have heard me think.

When the runner had worked his herd, he went to the second, then to the third, until he had secured the number of animals he wanted. The number of animals he could take at a stand varied, some herds being larger than others. My largest stand numbered

59. But Billy Dixon, a famous runner, once took 120 hides without moving his rest sticks. And Colonel Dodge told me of counting 112 carcasses within two hundred yards. Bob McRae once worked a stand of 54 buff and took 54 hides with 54 cartridges. I didn't do quite that well when I made my run of 59, for I used 62 cartridges.

We never killed all the buffalo we could, but only as many as our skinners could handle. Every outfit had its quota, determined by the ambition and the number of skinners. My own regular quota was 25, but on days when my men were in good fettle, not tired, I sometimes ran this up as high as 50 or 60. When we reached our quota, we stopped shooting, no matter how plentiful the buff were. Killing more than we could use would waste buff, which wasn't important, but wasting ammunition was important.

Has your idea that buffalo running was a pleasant, a safe, an enjoyable job changed since reading what I've had to say about it? All that I ever got out of the business was plenty of hard, dirty work. One or two seasons were enough for most men. But I wasn't so wise as they were—I kept right on. I wonder why I did.

Every day was about the same. Long before daylight I would have breakfast, then set out alone on my horse for my herd. I had scouted ahead; so I knew about where my game would be. Before it was light enough to shoot I could see the dim outlines of the animals, quietly cropping the grass or lying down. I would maneuver to get them into a gully if I could. And then I set my sticks at least 300 yards away, seeking some kind of protection from which to shoot—soapweeds, a buffalo wallow to hide in, tall grass.

As soon as dawn came I started in. Before I fired my first round I coolly estimated how many animals my skinners could care for that day. That many cartridges, plus three or four extra, I withdrew from my belt and spread out on the ground in front of me. When they were used up, I quit. My favorite holds were the neck and the heart, and whenever I hit a buffalo in those places I didn't have to look to see if he stayed down.

The three or four extra cartridges? Well, they were there for a use more important than buffalo. Remember I told you that

Indians were around us always? Those cartridges were Indian cartridges, and I wanted them handy in case I should have need for them. I did need them—twice. About those two incidents I shall tell presently.

As soon as I got back to camp we would move everything to the scene of the kill. And while the skimmers grumbly went to work I rested. I touch a skinning-knife? Not much! We had caste on the buffalo range—and I was a runner, not a skinner.

Harder than actual shooting was finding buff to shoot. You might think that, with millions of the beasts on the plains, we could sit in camp and shoot our quotas. But the range, you know, was 500 miles wide and 1,500 miles long. And you know that you could lose a lot of buffalo in a territory of that size.

The buffalo lived on a peculiar grass that carpeted the plains. To this day it is called buffalo grass, but the plow treated the grass as ruthlessly as the Sharps did the buff, and there isn't much left. In the spring the herds would begin working northward, to escape the hot Southern plains summers. This they continued until early fall, when they turned tail and went southward to escape the rigors of Northern winter weather. They were continuously migrating—that is, they simply were "follering the feed," as we runners used to put it.

We hunted along the courses of the streams. My hunting-ground took in nine rivers; the Brazos, the Red, the Cimarron, the Canadian, the Arkansas, the Solomon, the Republican, the Platte and the Niobrara. Study these rivers on your map today, and you will find them lined with the names of prosperous, thriving towns. But not in those days. Then there were a few frontier villages, and that was all. We didn't know it, but we were opening the way for the cattleman and later for the nester.

Skinning was dirty, disagreeable, laborious, uninspiring work. There was once a lazy skinner who tried to make it easy by driving a heavy iron picket-pin through the animal's head, anchoring it to the ground, hitching a team to the skin and yanking it off. This worked—sometimes. And sometimes it tore the hide in two.

We tried it for a few days in our outfit, and then I told my boys

that hereafter we were going to hand-skin every buffalo we killed, and we did. Careful skinning is one reason why I always commanded top prices for my hides.

Caring for the hides was simple. All we did was to peg them out, flesh side up, around camp. In a few days they dried, and we rolled them lengthwise in lots of 10, tied them into a bale, loaded 20 to 35 bales, weighing from 6,000 to 9,000 pounds, into the big wagon, and drove to market.

Marketing was no problem at all. Buyers at every frontier town offered cash for hides. I sold mine wherever I happened to be—Dodge City, Denver, Laramie City. Because of the care I gave them my hides were premium stuff. Knowing this, the buyers trusted me, and my hide-selling activities were always pleasant and satisfactory.

During the latter years of buffalo running there was a market for meat as well as for hides, buyers taking the whole animal with the hide on. I made more from meat and tongues and heads for several years than I made from hides. For meat I received as high as 4 cents a pound, but the usual price was around $2\frac{1}{2}$ cents. Smoked and packed in large barrels, buffalo tongues brought 25 cents apiece or more. I once sold a lot at 50 cents. An agent for the Carlton Club of London bought them, paying me \$500 for 1,000 tongues.

But though I sold thousands of pounds of buffalo meat, I never did know why anybody bought it. Not to eat, I hope. Buffalo meat was tough, stringy, tasteless. We runners never touched it unless we had to. We lived on store grub on the buffalo range—on the bacon, salt pork, beans, wheat bread and coffee of the frontier. When we wanted fresh meat, we ate deer or elk or antelope.

A little while ago I mentioned the running method of hunting buff. From the name you can surmise what it was—running the game down on horseback and shooting it with a short rifle or a heavy revolver.

Short-legged as he was, the buffalo could run about two-thirds as fast as a good American horse. You could easily get alongside

the animal and shoot it at a range of two or three feet. When you tried running for the first time, you found the chase exhilarating, exciting. That passed, and running buffalo soon became just about as thrilling as roping calves or playing checkers.

It wasn't dangerous, as some writers have tried to make you believe. The only hazard was the roughness of the ground and the dust stirred up by the running herds, which made your horse's footing uncertain. If your horse ever dropped into a badger hole, then you got the adventure you wanted.

I remember that once this happened to McRae. He was a fine horseman and had no difficulty in making running kills. On this day he was having exceptional luck. Selecting a fat heifer for his next shot, he pursued her, caught her, drew up alongside and leaned over to fire with his heavy Colt. Just then his horse stepped into a hole, stumbled and fell, throwing McRae over its head, right into that rushing herd.

McRae was born lucky. Instead of landing on the ground, where he would have been trampled to pieces, he fell right on the back of that heifer, straddle-legged. He held on and rode the buffalo out of the stampeding herd until he could slide off in safety. A close call.

I haven't said very much so far about Indians, but that is not because they didn't play a large part in our lives on the range. They did. You cannot disassociate the Indian and the buffalo, nor the runner and the Indian. We hunted the buffalo, and the Indian hunted us. The Indian menace was prevalent always, and we had to fight for our lives and our places on the range. That we fought well is the only reason why some of us are still here.

A great deal of sentiment has been wasted about the Indian. Writers have told glowing stories of his resentment toward the white invaders who came to kill his buffalo. Resenting anything that didn't contribute to his greed and his graft came easy and natural to the Indian. He was a born resenter. But he didn't try to kill us to stop the slaughter of the buffalo; he killed us to get what we had—our rifles, our horses, our scalps. The Indian

assisted in annihilating the buffalo by turning hide hunter himself, selling his hides for a pittance and killing all the buffalo he could possibly kill. For diversion he killed all the runners he could. But he didn't kill many. We learned how to take care of ourselves—we had to.

With the exception of the Pawnees and the Crows, who were "good" Indians, we had to be on the lookout for them all. In the southern areas of buffalo land we ran into Apaches and Comanches, two terrible tribes, ready to kill, to rob, to steal; up north we had the Sioux and the Blackfeet, treacherous foes, hard fighters; and in between were the Cheyennes, the Arapahoes and many lesser tribes, all eager to give us trouble.

They killed some runners, of course. An unwary or an inexperienced man would take to the range, Indians would bushwhack him—and weeks later we would find his mutilated body or discover some Indian with his rifle or wearing his clothes.

Only twice was I bushwhacked, escaping both times by the grace of my proverbial luck, which so far has held for eighty-three years.

The first episode was funny. I was working a stand in the Cimarron Bottoms when some premonition made me turn. I made out five stealthy forms creeping through the brush. Swinging around, I took swift aim at the nearest of these forms, not over 150 yards away, fired and missed. They all hunted cover in a little depression.

Only one rounded patch of brown, sticking up from behind a low soapweed, was in sight. This I knew was a humble part of some Indian's anatomy; so I took careful aim at it and let go. The result was hilarious. Up came the rest of the Indian as if blown by a mine. He jumped so high that I couldn't shoot again for laughing. Then he lit right out in high across the prairie, with the four others following.

To amuse myself I threw gravel up around them with carefully placed 550-grain bullets, just close enough to make them run faster. I have often wondered how long it was before that creased buck could sit down for his meals.

My second bushwhacking experience occurred on the eastern

ledge of the Llano Estacado (Staked Plain) in Texas. I had just finished my stand, risen to my feet to stretch, picked up my empty shells and was mounting my horse. Something whizzed by. I knew what it was—an arrow. I dodged back into the wallow and began looking for the reception committee. I saw no Indians. But not far away in a clump of small trees I made out three ponies. Knowing that if I got the Indians afoot I would have them at my mercy, I shot the ponies.

I waited for a while. Nothing moved. Then I made the "friends" sign and mounted my horse and rode in the "come to me" circle. But they didn't come. I repeated the sign, tapping my rifle. Still no action. This was annoying. Then I made out three forms in the tall grass. I fired close over their heads and made the friendship sign for the third time, impressively reloading my Sharps.

One of the Indians arose with dignity and walked out, followed by the second. But the third didn't come. I sent another bullet close to him, and that brought him out. It was a white man!

This didn't astonish me, for white renegades frequently herded with the Indians and were worse than any Indian could possibly be.

Waving in the direction of my camp, a mile or so away, I signaled "Go there." Keeping them beyond arrow range but within easy rifle shot, I herded them into camp. My men tied them up.

The Indians were young Poncas, the white a rough-looking customer. Questioned, the Poncas admitted that it was the white man who had led them on with promises of my rifle, much buffalo meat and a good horse.

"Let's kill them!" shouted Augustin, the negro cook. He didn't like Indians. He was excited.

The others clamored for their lives too. But I said no. Just then we were on friendly terms with the Poncas, and I didn't want a breach. So I suggested that we strip the renegade, make the Poncas whip him with our blacksnake and then drive the whole bunch from camp. We never saw them again.

Buffalo stampedes were just as dangerous, just as prevalent as Indians. I was in two.

When caught the first time, I was mounted on my good horse; so I just kept my head, outrode them and saved my life. That wasn't so bad. Scared? Not much. I was glad to get out of it, though.

But I think that the second stampede was my most exciting, my most dangerous experience on the buffalo range. It took place one Sunday morning in August, 1873. All of us were lying around in camp on the North Canadian, in Texas. Sunday was our odd-job day when we washed, bathed, read, loafed and talked.

On this fine summer morning I was loafing, stretched out flat on my back on the ground, enjoying the sun. I heard a noise like distant thunder. When I arose to my feet, I no longer heard it. Could it have been imagination? I wondered. The others were calmly smoking and talking; so I knew they hadn't heard anything. I put my ear to the ground and listened once more. Sure enough—a dull rumble such as might be caused by many hoofs. Sounds originating on the earth, you know, are better heard when the ear is close to the ground. I listened once more, wanting to make sure. It was there, all right.

I shouted: "Buffalo stampede—coming straight this way! Turn the wagons broadside—get your rifles quick!"

The boys thought I was crazy, because they hadn't heard a sound, but they were trained in obedience; so they all jumped to their work. In just a moment we had a barricade of wagons in front of us.

There were six of us in camp that day, my outfit of five and good old Brazos Bob. All were armed—I with my Sharps, Bob with a Spencer, the other four with .50-70 needle-guns.

"Don't fire until the leaders pass that knoll out in front of us!" I ordered.

We could see the herd coming now. We waited.

The herd approached with a solid front. Such a sight! It was magnificent, but I felt a qualmish feeling in my stomach. Just then the first animals crossed the deadline, and I aimed carefully and fired. I saw my buffalo topple. I heard in my ear the report of McRae's Spencer. And then for a while I heard nothing else.

I loaded and fired as rapidly as I could, and out in front it seemed to be raining buffalo. At our first volley the herd split, scampering away diagonally. We kept on firing, always at that one point, and soon the herd split completely. It wasn't our shooting that did it so much as the effect of our shots—the impassable barrier of dead buffalo we had piled up.

Among us we fired 48 shots, and when we counted noses we had 37 dead or crippled buffalo. And the most incredible part of the whole business was that 17 of these were good silks. How do you account for that? It was the strangest thing I ever saw in all my buffalo days.

About the way the plains Indians hunted buffalo I shall not have much to say. Indian methods of hunting are so interesting that they deserve to be told in a separate article—and this is my story. Almost from birth Indians hunted buffalo. They organized for hunting as carefully as for the war-path. Few white men ever accompanied Indians on a buffalo hunt. I was on two.

How many buffalo were slaughtered? This isn't pleasant to talk about. Nobody knows the answer. We have conjectures, but no solid facts. Colonel Dodge estimates the total to be 4,000,000. I say that that is low. My guess is that it should be nearer 10,000,000. But I don't know. With everybody hunting him, the buffalo's doom was certain.

I saw this when most runners were enthusiastically saying that though the slaughter was heavy the buffalo would last forever. The whole business disgusted me. I wanted to get out. The last few years I killed scarcely any buffalo, but acted as agent for other runners, selling their hides and meat for them.

Away up north on the Musselshell in Wyoming I shot my last buff. Just as my first one had been an old bull strayed from the herd, so was my last. He was surrounded by wolves, and I knew it was only a question of hours before they pulled him down, and to me it seemed an act of mercy to put him out of his misery. So I set the trigger of my .40-90 and aimed at his neck. He fell.

Near by was a herd of 12 fine cows. I could easily have killed every one. But I refrained. My buffalo days were over.

TRASH DUCKS¹

"That's what they call 'em down on Currituck, but it ain't so! They're good fowl!"

By H. P. SHELDON

OUTSIDE, in the icy blackness, a blustering wind roared across the open water of the lake. It made ghostly furrows of white water straight across from the Island Point Lighthouse to the bay; it whipped spouts of sand from the rim of the high bluff above the beach and shot hissing volleys of dead leaves along the bare and flinty upland fields.

Inside the cabin the fires roared. The lamps beamed a yellow, comfortable radiance. A tremendous steak just browning nicely on the hot griddle exploded tiny drops of gravy at the bubbling coffee pot. The Baritone and the Sniper, renegades for three days from any useful form of human endeavor, were in high spirits, for the weather, so unpleasant for any Christian undertaking, was just the sort of stuff that whistlers and bluebills glory in.

The steak was evenly divided into two juicy halves, and then for a time the wind and the fire had the argument to themselves.

"Whuff!" said the Baritone finally. "That was a three-pound steak, wasn't it? An' look at it now! I swear it doesn't seem possible that we'll survive the night! But I s'pose we will, an' if we do there'll be whistlers—green, sappy, unsophisticated whistlers just in from points north, so ignorant that they'll be fooled by

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that awful mess of blocks that Old Gabe calls his decoys. Trash ducks—whistlers and bluebills—*trash* ducks! My Lord! So they call 'em down Currituck, but it ain't so! No, sir! It ain't so! They're good fowl!"

Now it is a fact that whistlers are viewed with scorn by some wild-fowlers, but game species really ought to be, and in some instances are, valued according to the skill and endurance required of one who would take them. On such a basis the golden-eye is an aristocrat, even though the savory flesh that pads his ribs is not so thick, for instance, as that found on the mallard. His jacket is beautiful, and he is a fast and tricky flier. Above all else, he is a rough-weather bird, and one may—and will—get precisely as cold and windbeaten in the legitimate pursuit of whistlers as he will when gunning for canvasback.

Rap! Rap! Rap! Some hand at the door panel sought the refuge of the cabin.

The Sniper and his friend quietly exchanged a quick, understanding look.

"Ol' Cost-Ye-a-Little-Extry!" muttered the Sniper, and he opened the door to admit a mean-looking person in untidy clothes, whose sharp black eyes peered avariciously about the room as if appraising the cash value of the equipment which the gunners had unpacked.

A huge hawk nose gave the face a terrific predatory cast, and to the initiate all these signs marked the man a horsetrader. He was that, and he also owned the two rough ducking blinds down on the jut of sand and rocks that ran out into the waters of the bay. The revenue that he collected from this source and the additional increment derived from such unwary wild-fowlers as would play poker with him in the cabin at night made up in total a considerable sum.

Tonight he carried in one hand an earthen jug that bumped against his boot as he shuffled to a seat and gave off deep liquid sounds when he put it down. He pushed his cap back off his low forehead.

"Fetched ye a little mite o' cider," he remarked. "Course, it'll

cost ye a little extry, but it's mighty heartenin' on a cold night. Sweet, too, jest as sweet as sugar. No, tain't hard. No, sir. I put a puservative into it, an' it's kept nice. Goin' to be a good day for whistlers. Yes, sir! The bay's full o' duck. Fifty thousand on 'em, an' more coming in. Yes, sir. If the wind holds, the saouth blind'll be good; an' if it turns, as it may, the north blind will fetch 'em. You'll prob'ly want to hire both blinds, won't ye? Course, it'll cost ye a little extry, but what's money when you're shootin' ducks!"

His scornful laugh indicated that no real gunner ever thought in such mercenary terms.

Presently he proposed a little game of cards, with his jug chor-tling an accompaniment. The stuff tasted sweet and bland as milk to the palate, but was really as potent as a burst of machine-gun fire.

Now the "old" Army taught two things well—poker and due caution with treacherous beverages—so it happened that after an hour or two Gabe announced his decision to quit and go home. He had sustained alarming losses—two dollars and thirty-five cents, in fact—and his progress to the door was a marvel of high and solemn dignity. With his hand on the knob, he remarked disconsolately, "Certainly spread that puservative with a liberal hand," and vanished into the howling night.

The wind swung about during the night and blew more gently from the south when the two gunners slid down the sandy bluff to the beach a half hour before dawn. A few inches of water slipped uneasily to and fro across the bar as they made their way to the blind.

Such duck blinds are possibly seen nowhere else in the world but on Lake Champlain. They are a source of awe and wonder to every visiting sportsman, who, if he has shot ducks at other resorts, regards these monstrous, evergreen-laced shacks with frank suspicion and speculates as to the mental equipment of any duck that would approach such a flagrant device—and that of any man who would expect any duck to do so.

The blind is really a small cabin equipped with bunks, stove,

cooking utensils and two or three old chairs. The single door opens upon a narrow sort of porch with walls shoulder-high and a raised plank platform which the gunner mounts in order to fire over the decoys. The whole structure is covered with evergreen boughs—though no evergreen grows within half a mile of the stand.

The whole affair is as obvious as a lobster on a platter. As a matter of fact, these blinds are fishing huts, used by the sporting shore-dwellers for smelt and pickerel fishing on the ice in the winter months, and made to do duty as shooting boxes when the cold winds of autumn bring the hosts of winged migrants hustling down the old Iroquois war trail.

And the ducks do really come in to those blinds—even the cautious blacks. Possibly they feel that so obvious an ambush can't possibly be an ambush. Yet in other waters these same birds will laugh at the most skillfully arranged rigs in the world and flare off from a muskrat house, unless the rat himself is visible on his porch as evidence of verity.

Old Gabe's sack of disreputable decoys was dragged out—a most woebegone, battered and mismated set of blacks. The riggings of some had been shot away, accidentally, perhaps, or maliciously, by previous gunners. Here and there one showed a ragged hole at the water-line, where a fair load of sixes had landed.

"Look like the Constitution and the Guerriere," observed the Sniper. "Pickups, every one of 'em. The old scoundrel never bought a decoy in his life—he waits for 'em to get adrift from some other stool. But fasten 'em good, my lad! If you lose one, it'll cost ye——"

"Shut up!" growled the other savagely. "All this chat about money makes me nervous! Just hear the ducks!"

Across the water came the strange, faint, roaring sound made by thousands of diving ducks feeding. Now and then they heard the querying "When? When? When?" of bluebills above the murmurous chorus, and once a soft, wild gabble of sound that thrilled them both like a bugle.

"Geese, by ginger!" said one, and hastily they placed the last of the decrepit stool and beached the boat behind the blind.

A faint luminosity lay across the upper air. The beam from the lighthouse on the farther point had lost its earlier brilliance, and winked palely and wan. With a ringing of tiny bells a flock of whistlers, early astir, went down the bay, passing like specters just outside the decoys. The gray and white of their regimentals were nearly invisible against the vague background of sky, far shore and water.

The lighthouse gleamed again, and finally. Daylight was suddenly upon the waters, and simultaneously there came the whipping rush of heavy wings from somewhere above the blind. Too late the Sniper spied the five big birds hastening southward and already eighty tantalizing yards away.

"There go the geese!" he exclaimed. "Gosh! They must have passed us in range, too! If I could get one good crack at those fellows, I'd be willing to hang up the fiddle!"

The Baritone moaned. "Me, too! I never did see one of 'em closer than half a mile before. Lord! Aren't they beauties?"

While they gazed entranced at the vanishing geese, a whistler, coming in close under the lee of the spit, dropped quietly among the decoys and sat there, as wooden as the worst of them.

The Baritone looked northward toward the raft of feeding fowl. None were moving yet; or if they were, the faint haze that blew gently along the water effectually masked these distant maneuvers. He occupied himself in a bitter contemplation of Old Gabe's stool.

"Ain't that a hell of an outfit, now it's light enough to see 'em?" said he. "The dowdy-looking, leprous gargoyles! Look at the one on the near corner! Gosh! We ought to go out and set his head on straight. He'll scare a duck to death—sittin' cock-eyed that way. Hell fire! He doesn't look any more like a whistler than my aunt's hat! I've a notion to——"

The derided decoy at this point set his bill toward the lighthouse, and took off in a flurry of foam and flickering wingbeats.

"That's funny, I s'pose," said the Baritone.

On this water, bluebills are loath to come to a point set; but a long curl of them, coming up the lake in perfectly drilled squadrons, suddenly tilted and came straight in—a disciplined van of

birds that swept across the decoys and wheeled and swung not twenty yards above the blind. A particularly fat and attractive duck caught the Sniper's seeking eye, and his 16-gauge began to erupt. The duck, among the countless scores that hissed past on all sides, looked as big as a buzzard, but the gun refused to get to that deadly spot six inches in front of the broad bill. Load after load went fruitlessly aloft until the edge of the blind blocked further effort.

The Baritone, humped over his weapon like a machine gunner, was cleaning ducks. Four of them fell in and around the blind before the cavalcade swept out of range.

Afterward, the Sniper stirred a heap of smoking cases with his toe. "Dog-gone, boy! Look here!"

Five shell cases lay on the floor at his feet, and of the five only two were empty!

"Pumped 'em through without shootin' 'em," he declared wonderingly.

And so he had—but he never knew how he did it, for it was supposed to be a mechanical impossibility.

The shooting stirred the rafting fowl. Thousands of birds were in the air—compact flocks of six to a dozen birds and skeins made up of hundreds of fowl swinging and weaving low across the water or twisting in loose curves and spirals above the horizon. The gunners gave little heed to the larger flocks, but watched eagerly the smaller bunches that moved like swallows just above the water. These stragglers would furnish most of the shooting, while the larger congregations would pass wide and high off the point.

The whistler is admirably colored to harmonize with the slaty blue and dense white of rough water. Even with two good pairs of eyes on watch, whistlers will again and again sneak into the decoys unseen until the long splash of their normally tumultuous landing warns the gunners. Someone—an Indian, probably—named these birds ghost ducks, or spirit ducks, and so is qualified to rank with those immortals who knew the priceless value of the right word.

"There's a bunch coming on the inside track!" whispered the Baritone, his forehead pressed against the prickly evergreen screen as he strove to follow the driving flock.

"Can't see 'em!" muttered the other. "Say the word when they're in!"

"They're coming! They're coming! Right over the corner! Now!"

Both men lunged upward on the shooting bench. Thirty yards out, eight whistlers, six hens and two cock birds, were slanted into the decoys. Three alighted and sat among the wooden ducks, while the others, alarmed, lifted their paddles and with furiously beating pinions bore straight out into the open lake. Three of these went down, to strike the water like plunging shells and float breasts upward amid the decoys. Thereupon, the birds that had alighted looked at one another in a shocked and horrified manner, and essayed to leave the unholy congregation without words and at once.

The Baritone's big 12 boomed twice, while the Sniper swung with deadly intent on a black and white drake. The bird collapsed, but went under water the instant it struck in a single continuous motion and without interrupting its fall, apparently. It did not show again until it was seventy yards out.

The Sniper dashed out, leaped into the skiff and started off in pursuit, for if a wing-tipped whistler is not retrieved at once he is not retrieved at all. Driving the skiff with all his strength, the gunner gave the bird no attention until he was over the area where it had vanished. Lifting his oars, he watched the surface, and presently, fifty yards away, a black head showed momentarily and vanished. After him went the Sniper, repeating the performance half a dozen times.

By now the duck was tiring, and its brief appearances were at shorter intervals and within a few yards of the boat. Now the Sniper dropped his oars and seized his gun. Twice the quick black head rose and vanished before he could bring the gun to bear, but at last the chance came. A load of shot exactly timed caught the target fairly, and a plump duck bobbed to the surface.

'Glad of that,' muttered the gunner. 'I'd rather a darned sight miss 'em clean than hit 'em and lose 'em.' He was astonished to observe that he was half a mile from the blind.

The Baritone slew a pair while the other was rowing in, and there was joy in his face as he looked down at the Sniper from the high wall of the ridiculously effective ambush. 'A flight must have come in last night,' he announced. 'They're all decoying. Get in here quick!'

A lone bluebill, following the shore line on hissing wings, came to the Sniper's side, and was dropped and gathered with all the acclaim due his rank, for though whistlers are not to be scorned, the plump scaup rates an extra flourish and ruffles.

Another high light came when the Sniper, seated comfortably before the oil stove in the blind with a smoking cup of coffee in one fist and a huge sandwich in the other, saw, through the tiny window, a shadow that flashed past the stool. At high speed and with perfect economy of motion, he placed his viands on the bench, seized his gun, dashed back to the door, and nailed a whistler just a yard inside the extreme range limit of an ounce of chilled sixes!

Soon after lunch the two gunners observed various flocks of bluebills that came from far down the lake. The first of these dropped to the surface of the bay half a mile away and were instantly lost to view against the neutral background. But presently, as other flocks decoyed to the small original colony, the living raft grew until it was visible as a deep, black line that stretched for a mile across the water.

'Must be ten thousand of 'em,' the Baritone estimated.

'Yes! And mighty little good they'll do us. They'll sit there until sundown and never get nearer than they are now. I'm going up to the cabin and get a box of 2's. There'll be a lot of birds passing outside the stool just at sunset, and with the right prescription you can trip one up at sixty yards once in a while.'

The speaker left the blind, crossed the bar and climbed the bluff. At this point he paused. A deep, rolling thunder came from the bay, and turning he saw the whole tremendous raft of bluebills.

on the wing. With the perfect precision of flight so characteristic of the scaup, the whole division swung against the breeze, dipped and flowed—exactly like masses of maneuvering cavalry—and then, to the Sniper's amazement, came swiftly and certainly toward the blind. He prayed that his friend was on the alert to profit by this phenomenon.

Just as the front ranks were breaking and flaring twenty yards above the blind, a gun barrel rose behind the cedar fringe and he saw the light vapor of the explosions and stricken fowl collapsing. After an appreciable time the sound of the shots came to his ears. The leading ducks spun off to the right and left, but the rearward squadrons swept on, heedless of the Baritone, who now dropped his empty gun and seized the one the Sniper had left. This he emptied also, and still the stream of ducks swept on and over until the last file closer in the uttermost rank had sped over the decoys and slanted away after his fellows.

Six birds bobbed about among the decoys when the astonishing visitation had vanished. The Baritone, reluctant to spoil the flavor of the experience by further shooting at strays and stragglers, collected his birds and retired to his corner for the afternoon to meditate, no doubt, upon the infinite powers of a telepathy that could call ten thousand bluebills to him from the safety of the open bay. Having accomplished the incomprehensible stunt, the entire raft swung back and alighted precisely on the spot from which it had recently risen. Nor, so far as the human eye could measure, had the raft moved a yard from its position at sundown.

The Sniper, who warmed a hope that the miracle would be repeated for his benefit, was compelled to make up his score from the smaller bunches of whistlers that scouted continuously up and down the shore line. At sunset he climaxed his day by doubling on a pair of fat, red-legged black ducks that came silently down over the bar. So heavy with luscious fat were these birds that one of them, hurtling down upon the hard sand, split like a ripe plum!

That night the cabin stove was stuffed until it roared. A pair of ducks, neatly trussed, lay ready for the bed of broiling coals.

The Baritone, kicking off his boots from numbed feet, held his cramped fingers to the heat and remarked:

“Trash ducks? No, sir! It’s a rough, tough sport, and I’d as soon have whistlers as canvasback—’specially when I can’t get the canvasback. Ho, hum! How about opening a couple of cans of beans and some corned beef to sort of go with those ducks you’re fixing?”

MILSTEAD ROPES ONE¹

*A thrilling tale in which a quail hunter
captures a huge diamondback rattlesnake
with his bare hands*

By ARCHIBALD RUTLEDGE

THE WHOLE THING probably started on the day Vincente Blasco's motorboat ran out of gas when it was in the river opposite Norman Milstead's plantation. "I thought something would happen to you on your pleasure jaunts one of these days, Vincente," Milstead was saying as he met the little Italian down on the decrepit plantation wharf.

Beneath Vincente's piratic mustache gleamed white teeth. He could smile engagingly. "I need de gas," he explained. "My tank, heem is dry."

"Can't you burn moonshine?"

"Too much expense," Vincente explained seriously, with a gesture somewhat Oriental and certainly comprehensive.

"I can let you have five gallons. Will you bring it back to me next week?"

"Yes, and bring you six for your favor."

"Look here, Vincente," said Milstead, a sudden thought coming to him, "I want to show you something. While your man is getting the gas, just come over here with me by this big oak."

Milstead led the Italian down a short stretch of river-bank, over-arched with jasmine vines, dimmed by myrtle that exhaled

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fragrance as they brushed the bushes. They emerged upon an open glade under a monster live-oak—a vast tree that must have stood there for nearly two centuries. Over it clambered huge man-bodied vines; and growing on the marvelously long limbs, some of them parallel with the ground and not more than five feet from it, were fairy forests of vivid green ferns. Near the base of the oak the plantation owner paused.

They made an interesting contrast in manhood as they stood there together: the Italian, short, stout, swarthy, radiating a certain charm which came from quick apprehension, alert interest, deft precision in adjusting himself to any situation. Milstead was tall, grave, clean-shaven; a powerful figure, but spare. His hair was black, and inclined to curl a little; his eyes were dark blue. They looked rather piercingly from under beetle brows. Such eyes can be tender; but they can also be vindictive.

It was hard to get at the age of Vincente; possibly fifty, though his flair for living always made him appear younger than he was. But certainly he was older than Milstead, by ten, possibly fifteen, years.

"Some tree," said Vincente, his quick black eyes appraising the majesty of the monarch.

"I didn't bring you here to look at a tree," Milstead said; "you have seen plenty of big ones in Italy. But, Vincente, I want you to see what came my way yesterday. You're interested in natural history."

He stepped around the tree, leading Blasco by the arm. Pausing, he pointed to something hung against the rugged bark of the old patriarch. Another patriarch it was, and apparently of another world. Milstead expected an exclamation of awe from his visitor. But all he got was a chirpy whistle, perhaps of mild surprise.

"I killed it and brought it in," Milstead explained. "There is a den out near a place called Jones' Pond. One was killed there two years ago; now this one; a third has been seen. I fastened this one up here this morning to photograph him. Seven feet, nine inches he measures; and his weight is thirty-four pounds. He had eighteen rattles. It is what we call a diamondback. You aren't

seeing things, Vincente. But you didn't leave anything like that in Italy."

If Vincente was impressed by these words, his reaction was singular indeed.

"Ah," he breathed, as if he hadn't really heard Milstead at all; and he stepped forward toward the snake and touched it with a delicate forefinger. "Ah, my friend," he went on, "it is a pity that he is dead. If he was alive, I could make you an offer for heem."

"Offer?" asked Milstead. "What in the world would you do in the city with a monster like that? The whole police department would raid your fruit shop."

"A serpent like this—deadly, terrible—he is what the people like to see. 'Oh,' " he mimicked, " 'have you seen what Vincente Blasco has in his store on Broad Street? It is one of the wonders of the world. It is a sea-serpent. It is a chimera. It frightened me, but I am glad I saw it.' So they would talk," Vincente explained. "They would come. That means trade. I hear, too," he added, "that rats have a fear of such a snake. I have too many rats. It would be nice arrangement."

"Perhaps I can get you one," Milstead said. "What would he be worth? But I don't vouch for the nice arrangement part of it."

"I am no dealer in such pretties," Vincente answered; "but if he is as large as this one, and full of life, I give you feefty dollars."

"Next week," Milstead answered, "when you come by here on one of your trips, leave those six gallons of gas for me, and have fifty dollars handy in your rompers."

It was the first week in October when all this occurred; and it happened that at the time Milstead had little work on his hands. To ride the woods, to locate a big diamondback, and to capture him for Blasco—this seemed an easy and rather an interesting way to make fifty dollars. Besides, he would be ridding his own place of a creature that was a somewhat constant menace to man and to stock. Only the month before he had lost a Jersey heifer from snake-bite. The thing was worth trying at any rate. Besides, he could take his gun along and round up a covey or two. It was the first of the season, and his old setter was sick for a hunt.

Two days after Vincente's visit, Milstead made an early start for what he believed to be the rendezvous of a fine covey of quail, and possibly of a diamondback as well. The nature of the morning did not appear quite in keeping with so curious and grim an enterprise. An autumn haze hung over the river, where the long lances of light from the rising sun made the mists sparkle. Into the purple tops of towering yellow pines stole the radiant beams; and from those crests were raveled away streamers of light.

Mocking-birds, returning to their lyric mood after a long silence, were warbling from smilax-crowned hollies and cedars. Carolina wrens called with wild, sweet abandon to one another. Milstead heard one quite near him, and another answering from across the river, a full half-mile away.

The world was steeped in a mellow peace, a balmy serenity. Mystical airs breathed through the quiet forest, in the circling arms of which Milstead's home lay. It seemed a morning for almost any other kind of an undertaking than the one that was afoot.

But perhaps, thought Milstead, Poe was wrong in giving dismal settings for his dismal tales. The effect of tragedy may be heightened by contrast; there is something satiric in the peril that is encountered in beautiful sunshine, with birds happily warbling, and with the sky gazing calmly down with eyes of fathomless azure.

"I believe I can locate one of these things for Vincente," Milstead told himself as he journeyed out through the scented woodland. "The old dog can take care of himself all right. He knows a snake."

As the forest glimmered in the dawn, it was a radiant, dewy world into which the plantation-owner rode. The pine-trash on the road exhaled a spicy odor of freshness and wild cleanliness. High in the lustral morning heavens the giant yellow pines soared, choiring softly to the rising sun. The wild-woods glinted, shimmered, seemed aware of the miracle that they themselves were. It did not appear the kind of world that might hold peril and tragedy. It appeared made for love and peace, for song and joy.

Milstead knew where certain great diamondbacks had their haunt. During the preceding summer his neighbor, Claude Marlowe, a woodsman of the pineland, had killed one that was little short of eight feet. Milstead had wondered at it; had examined it as it had hung on a persimmon bush beside the public road. And one of his hounds, happening to pass the place, began to show signs of extreme caution and mistrust; finally located the thing; backed away with the glint of ancient wisdom in his sagacious eyes, and, ere he left the scene, howled lugubriously.

Paris Green Washington, a plantation negro of a singular dearth of imagination, had reported that he had seen, near the same locality, a snake of the same species and apparently of the same proportions. Several other persons had had the dubious privilege of seeing one of these serpent-wonders; and each person had apparently made his discovery in the neighborhood of Jones' Pond, a strange cypressed lagoon that lay on Milstead's place, not two miles from the house. He had reason to believe these negroes and their stories, especially since each one admitted that his attitude toward the chimera in question had been one of extreme conciliation. Then, of course, there was this late serpent that Milstead had shown to his friend Vincente Blasco.

"I'll get him one," he repeated; "and he'll be as welcome to it as fifty dollars will be to me. Besides, I've a sneaking interest in these babies that love so to play with their rattles."

He had tied behind his saddle a big burlap sack. Stopping by a group of young hickories, he cut one with a stout fork in its end. He had caught snakes before. Pinning one's head to the ground with the fork, he would hold him tight until he could get his hand around the thing's neck. Then it could be lifted and thrust down into the bag. The sack tied shut, he would leave his catch until he could return to the plantation for a wagon and a big box.

It may be thrilling, but it isn't exactly delicately discreet to carry a diamondback in a flimsy bag. A mere scratch from an inch-long fang may do damage that no amount of caution and effort can repair.

Out of the plantation's far gateway and into the lonely woods

the man rode. The baby-branches, drenched in fragrant dew, glistened, and exhaled a winy fragrance. The sunshine filtered shyly into these remote solitudes.

Milstead saw a buck, thin strips of velvet hanging in tatters from his horns, slide into a myrtle thicket. Woodpeckers were hammering in assiduous fashion, calling stridently whenever they let up on their carpentering. Cicadas began to shrill, but not so aridly as they would later in the day.

A half-mile from the gate, Milstead turned off the road, literally taking to the woods. He had a curious feeling that the rare exotic beauty of the world which surrounded him had about it something sinister, something ironic, something satiric. He attributed his sensation to the eerie grimness of his mission. And it was the anticipation that caused his feeling. When he actually came on the snake, all would be well. All would be well. . . . He began to wonder if it would. . . .

Afar off now, in the open pinelands, appeared the lagoon, marked by its magical gleam of black waters, its moss-hung bald cypresses, its aspect of perpetual, mournful beauty. In those giant trees snowy egrets nested, so spectral in their loveliness as to be like spirits of the place. In the dark waters alligators lived their solitary, treacherous lives; and large-mouth bass of unbelievable size managed to exist there by reason of their swiftness as dodgers of the huge reptiles. Wood-ducks nested in the low forks of the cypresses; and often they were seen, as placid and as beautiful as the waters themselves, floating on that mirror-like surface.

To the right of the lagoon was a long savanna—a green plain of many acres in extent, where flag-flowers grew, and gaudy fly-traps, and alluring orchis flowers. It had a certain air of faerie peril, a beauty not quite of earth, an eerie loveliness not quite familiar, not quite smiling. It was toward this glimmering stretch of country that Milstead headed his horse.

It was the horse that gave him the first intimation that he had found what he was after. For a few yards Milstead noticed that his animal—a little red pony that he enjoyed riding because of his sure-footedness in the woods—began to show a gingerly sort

of stepping that his rider interpreted to mean that the creature did not like the lush, quaking footing that the savanna afforded. Milstead idly recalled that the pony had one spring bogged down in a ricefield; and now he thought it possible that that far recollection had returned to him.

But then the horse stopped. His head went up high. He trembled. His ears were cocked. He gave vent to a shocked and mighty snort, as if blowing spasmodically from him some dreadful odor. Probably that was precisely what the red pony was doing.

He next began to quiver violently; and his whole attitude gave his rider to understand that they had both better be moving out of that place.

"It may be a snake," the man said slowly. "Well," he added half aloud, "that's what I've come after."

He decided to dismount. There were no trees near. A strange, scrubby, little live-oak growing forlornly on the edge of a ridge of sand that crossed the savanna seemed the only place where he could tie his horse. That he must tie him was evident, for by now the animal was positive that his life depended upon his immediate departure for somewhere else.

His rider slipped from him, leading him with much persuasion to the oak bush, where he tied him securely. The morning was warm. Milstead slipped off his coat, tying it to the saddle. Then he began to look about cautiously.

He whistled for his setter. Then, for the first time, he noticed the dog standing. Could it be a covey of quail? Could it be a woodcock, migrated early? It might be a snake. That it was Milstead grew more certain as he watched how fidgety the dog was, and with what a curious gleam in his eyes he stared at the bushes ahead of him.

Down the ridge of sand he went, peering ahead under the sparse growth of huckleberry bushes. . . . Suddenly a curious odor assailed him. He knew it must be animal, but it seemed vegetable. It was like cucumber; yet its pungency was like that of bear-scent. Milstead knew what it was. If he had been flamboyant in his way of thinking, he would have called it the odor of Sudden Death.

"I see it now," he said to himself. "It's about the kind that Vincente wants, too. It's rather larger than any I've ever picked up. It certainly is no plaything."

Under the bronzing huckleberry bushes lay the great serpent—a regal reptile. He had lately shed his skin, and in his tawny gold phase he looked almost gaudy. Black and yellow and brown he gleamed on the white sand, lying there indolently in a huge S-shape. Milstead caught the glint from his cold unlidded eyes.

But, after all, a man is a man, and a snake is of a creation infinitely and remotely inferior. Against a sensible man, even the hugest diamondback, lacking the tremendous advantage of surprise, is helpless.

Milstead strode forward softly, his forked stick held before him. The snake saw the weapon coming; he seemed to bulge. Thrillingly his rattles began to sing their arid warning. Preliminary to taking his coil, the serpent foreshortened himself. His bulk seemed amazing.

Milstead could not help marking the thin, contemptuous lips of his antagonist; his baleful spade-head; his massive jaws, powerfully articulated. The Seminoles used to call him "The Great King"; and this specimen justified that proud appellation.

The man had a curious feeling that he was intruding; though perhaps that is a somewhat natural emotion that any man may experience upon encountering a deadly serpent in the wilds. Really, Milstead thought, this was the diamondback's home, this lush savanna, this dreamy stealthy place; the dim shores of this lonely lagoon—they were the serpent's by right of eminent domain.

"I'll have to get the dog out of the way first," he said to himself. "This is strictly my little affair."

Jerking a chain from his pocket, he walked around cautiously, fastened the snap to a ring in the setter's collar, and then led him to a safe distance, where he tied him to a stout bush. Returning, he found that the great serpent had not moved. Milstead extended his forked stick, parting the bushes. A man must be sure that he's dealing with only one snake. These beauties often come in pairs.

Now the forked stick was close to the snake's massive head. There was a chance that the reptile would strike at it. Milstead did not want to infuriate it more than was necessary, though capture would assuredly madden it. With a deft maneuver, avoiding the spade-shaped head, he thrust the fork down strongly behind the massive jaws. The pointed ends of the stick were buried in the sand. The diamondback was securely caught.

As Milstead expected, the body of the snake writhed weirdly out of the bushes, his rattles whirring wildly. The powerful muscular body, contorted into fearsome coils of frantic maneuvers, turned and twisted above the copper-colored huckleberry leaves. Keeping the fork tightly thrust downward, the man approached. He had done this thing before. But something now told him to beware. . . . Several times in his life he had had what appeared to be premonitions. He certainly felt one now. But there was Vincente, and his fifty dollars.

Stooping now, with his stick held tighter than ever, Milstead thrust his left hand down under the bushes. It touched the snake's back. It slipped down that gorgeous broad hide until the fingers were just behind the forked stick. Then they closed like a vise about the snake's throat. Milstead had the thing by the neck. He released the stick, and tossed it aside into the savanna. Then he tried to rise from his stooped position.

The effort caused him to stagger. He found himself suddenly struggling with main power to hold his grip on the diamondback's neck; and he staggered when he lifted that massive writhing weight. But he steadied himself. He was apparent master of the situation after all. Then he took a step toward his horse.

The red pony had witnessed the whole singular performance; and there was no denying that he understood the entire affair—everything save what he believed his master's arrant folly. He now stood quite ready and also quite determined to make a bolt. This Milstead evidently did not perceive—or was too busy with another matter to take much account of.

The body of the diamondback writhed upward. Almost before his captor realized what was happening, the snake had coiled its

immense body about his left arm; and partly because of pain, partly certainly because of anger, and wholly because it was struggling for its freedom, the reptile began to constrict the man's arm. At first Milstead, his eye now on the pony, was not exactly aware of what was really happening. Other serpents had done precisely the same thing before.

He was walking slowly toward his horse, talking to it to make it calm. He glanced down at his left hand, extended now away from him, and to his horror he saw that the rattler's head was moving; it seemed to have some purchase that the man could not control. At the same time, Milstead felt a certain dim but positive numbing of his left arm.

The diamondback was tightening his coil about the man's bare arm; that grip was deadening. It meant that the man's grasp of the snake's neck would inevitably weaken. It was loosening now. Milstead knew it. The great serpent appeared to know it, for he continued slowly but remorselessly to tighten his deadly coil.

Unless he could do something quickly, the sure thing to happen would be that the snake, freeing his head, would strike the man. Already that grim head was moving in the man's grasp. Milstead dared not reach round with his right hand; for, not knowing just what liberty the reptile had, he did not know whether he might not launch himself forward for an inch or two, sufficiently far for a fatal strike.

He thought of stooping down and laying the snake's head on the sand, and trying to crush it with his heel. But such a maneuver, with a serpent of this size and strength, would likely mean bungling—the rattler's pulling loose, and striking surely and with deadly effect.

Then there was the chance that the man might hold his grip until he could ride in to the plantation for help. It would take only a matter of a few minutes. That seemed the best way out—if he could hold on. But that was the question. Milstead had encountered something too formidable for him. He felt himself outmaneuvered and, physically, almost overpowered.

Few people realize the sheer animal strength of a serpent of

this size. Milstead began to realize it. He would have to get help. The thing seemed to have him.

But he had forgotten for the moment that the horse was fully aware of the nature of the thing the man was carrying. As his master approached, the red pony backed away, snorting, straining at the buck-hide thong that tied him. Even the stubborn live-oak bush was bent almost over with the frantic pulling of the tethered mount.

While Milstead was still five yards away, he saw that he would never ride home on that horse with that snake. There are some things that simply cannot be done. The man doubted if he could get up to the red pony, much less mount it and ride away. Clearly the horse considered that to approach was his master's intent; and with equal clearness he considered that such an intent was an imposition.

Milstead paused, talking to the pony the while. Well a horse knows the tone of fear; and it fills him with apprehension. There was the red pony, his head and neck extended, the thong that tied him taut as a bowstring. There was his would-be rider, a horrible thing in his hand, his arm banded by the cold coils of a chimera—a tortured man, trying to speak words of assurance. There was the diamondback, momentarily insinuating himself out of the man's nerve-wrung grasp.

There seemed no help near for Milstead. He thought of the oily Vincente Blasco, and he cursed him in his heart.

Milstead looked about him for a moment, trying to locate a weapon of some sort. The long, sandy ridge spanning the pale green savanna offered nothing. The beauty of the bright woodland mocked the man. Flocks of bluebirds were warbling like aerial rivulets. The sunshine made the lovely savanna twinkle with myriads of lustrous lights. There was a fragrant, meadowy scent of dew and lush foliage and rare flowers awaft in the air.

But all this was irony. Here was a man fighting for his life.

There was a half-hitch tying the red pony to the oak bush. The same kind of tie fastened the thong to the bridle. Milstead felt a sudden overpowering need for that tough, pliable piece of buck-

skin. But whether he could get it was the question. Undoubtedly the pony was about to break away. Whether the thong would break, or whether it would pull off at one end or the other, who could tell? The man had to have a part of that thong. He stepped forward toward the horse.

Of course, the red pony now knew that his master was demented. He reared, plunged. Milstead walked toward him, but now he held his fettered left arm behind him, away from him. It dropped with exhaustion and with the dead weight of the diamondback. He was almost to the horse now. The red pony blew out his breath in a long, amazed snort. He pawed bickeringly. His eyes were bulging large, and showed much white. His ears were shot straight forward at an angle that expressed both acute astonishment and vivid alertness.

Milstead reached his right hand forward to get it on the dangling loose tip of the half-hitch. He had, of course, to loose it at the bridle. The horse tried to bolt. The thong held. The horse curvetted until he almost ran around Milstead. With a deft lunge the man leaped forward, caught the tip of the thong, and gave it a jerk.

The red pony was free; and he appeared to appreciate marvelously his freedom. He flashed through the edge of the savanna, snorting loudly; he dashed away frantically, yet unwilling to lose any sight of what might be happening. With stirrups flying and clanking, he galloped off, looking back first from one side, then from the other, his head wildly high, his mane and tail streaming. A ship is by no means the only thing that sets its sails when it lifts anchor.

Milstead's horse was gone. But he had the buck-hide thong. The other end of it was still tied to the stout oak bush. With his right hand, with fingers which trembled and appeared woefully bungling, he painfully made a slip-knot in the end of the buck-skin. With his teeth he tightened a ball-knot on the end of the lithe, strong string.

He made no attempt to loose the other end from the bush. Rather he edged away from it until the thong was taut once more,

the bush bending. Then with infinite caution, he lifted the open slip-knot, dropped it neatly over the serpent's head, saw that the loop tightened in place. Then he got down on his knees, so that the stretched thong would be parallel with the ground. It was an awkward stance, but an effective one.

He backed slowly away. The noose tightened, the strangling diamondback writhed; the bush bent low. Milstead felt the constricting bands on his arm relaxing. He was aware of breathing more easily. In another moment the pull of the bush whipped the snake, heavy as it was, clear away from him, throwing it on the sand in the little oak's sultry shadow.

The man regained his feet, breathing heavily, looking down on the writhing chimera that but a moment before had literally had him in its grasp. In the high pines near the lagoon, pines that now murmured and waved in an ecstasy of morning gladness, parula warblers chanted their elfin melodies. The sun gleamed and glinted across the savanna as if nothing had happened.

Milstead thought bitterly that the same melodies would have been lyrically chanted, the same sunlight lustrally gleamed, had the great reptile made an end of him. He had long since learned what every true woodsman knows: that under the beauteous garb of nature beats a heart that is relentless; for to him who sees aright, the countenance of nature has always about it something not quite intimate, not quite safe.

"He'll stay there, I think, for a while," said Milstead, eying the massive convolutions of the huge serpent turning and wallowing in the dry sand beside the oak bush. Then, having gone over and loosed the setter, he turned and started toward the glimmering lagoon.

On the borders of this he caught the red pony. From behind the saddle he unstrapped the heavy burlap bag: Retracing his steps, he was soon, again on the ridge of sand spanning the savanna. It was now no task to lift the half-strangled snake by the heavy thong and drop it in the sack. The mouth of this he tied shut. Then he carried his burden rather gingerly out toward the road, where he laid it in a heavy bed of gallberry bushes.

To ride back to the plantation, returning with a wagon and a box for the captive, were matters of only a half hour. And in an hour Milstead had the huge diamondback free of sack and of buckskin thong, safely in a commodious box with a wire front. But he built a little extension and put a second wire front protecting the first—or protecting those who were curious enough to investigate. The whole dread arrangement he put in an empty feedhouse, awaiting the coming of Vincente Blasco.

In a few days' time the familiar spluttering of the Italian's motorboat engine was heard on the river; and, true to his promise, he delivered at Milstead's wharf six gallons of gasoline. He found Milstead somewhat grim and silent.

"How 'bout da beeg snake?" he asked. "You cannot catch so easy, I know. Maybe next week, next month?"

"You can get him today," Milstead replied in a most disinterested fashion.

"You got heem? 'Live? Beeg one?"

"Big enough," the other admitted. Vincente drew out his wallet. "I have feefty for you," he said, peeling off the tens from an astonishing assortment.

"Now, Vincente," Milstead said, "this thing you are getting is a dangerous thing, you understand?"

"I want him dang'rous," the little Italian answered.

"But no monkeying with him will do," the other warned. "You must keep people away from him, and you must stay away yourself."

"He not much to handle," Vincente said easily. "You catch heem, is it not?"

"Yes, I caught him."

"Easy?"

"Oh, yes," Milstead responded dryly. "I just lassoed him and dropped him in a sack."

Vincente, always a bit of an actor, suddenly made the deft motions of throwing a lariat, then of lifting with it something heavy that he had caught. "Like dat?" he queried, his white teeth flashing.

"Well, yes," Milstead admitted, grudgingly, "but with a good deal less effort."

"I will get heem now," the Italian said. "You ought to go into the business," he advised, his sharp black eyes gleaming. "Easy money."

"Thanks."

"You could catcha many beeg snake."

"I rather think, Vincente," Milstead answered, with a certain depth of meaning that the other could not fully appreciate, "that perhaps there are some things in this world not meant to be caught."

THE WORLD'S GREATEST SHOT¹

A short time before Doc Carver died he attested the truth of the feats herein recounted. The author has gone to extremes in an attempt to verify them elsewhere. Some of these seem impossible, but many of the most miraculous are supported by unquestionable evidence

As told to
CHARLES B. ROTH

by
DOC W. F. CARVER

FOR NEARLY fifty years I was a professional rifle shot. During that time I gave exhibitions in all parts of the world, shooting, I estimate, over 2,000,000 rounds of ammunition before the public, and winning and keeping every title a shooter could have, besides creating several of my own. Several of the records I established are still standing and, I truly believe, will always stand.

I took the title "Champion Rifle Shot of the World" because it had a good advertising value for my exhibitions and also because it was true. About fifteen years ago I gave up shooting altogether, when one of my rifles exploded in my face, blinding me for three weeks.

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All through my shooting years I naturally had some interesting, some exciting and on several occasions some disquieting experiences. What used to annoy me more than anything else was to have any one doubt my shooting prowess and accuse me of either faking or just playing in high luck. I never, never faked, as many riflemen used to, by shooting shot instead of single bullets—but as to having luck, there never was a man born with more than I.

I recall one time that proves this. In 1879 I went over to Europe to show how an old-time Western buffalo hunter could shoot. All the atmosphere possible I took along with me—the long hair, buckskin coat, big hat, high boots and a few other frontier oddities for good measure. Everywhere I went I was a hit.

In Sandringham, England, I started giving my exhibition to the largest audience I had thus far seen. My exhibition consisted of shooting at objects thrown into the air: bits of coal, glass balls, blocks of wood and coins. I originated this form of shooting and always believed I was its most adept practicer. Some other shooters from time to time have said no, however. In 1879 the idea was new and it was taking Europe by storm.

The crowd at Sandringham that day was one of the most notable I had ever heard of. It included the Prince of Wales and his closest court associates. They were all dressed up like a conference of Sioux chiefs gathered for a powwow. And weren't they appreciative of what I did! In America I had never had such an audience as this. Let me break a lump of coal though the shot be ever so easy, and they applauded so sincerely I knew right then that in their estimation I was the most wonderful shot in all the big world. I began thinking then how little I was really appreciated at home in America, and I pitied myself for that. Now that I am eighty-seven years old I understand when a man gets into that mind something is due to happen to him. And happen to me it did that day and very soon. I had just knocked a lump of coal into a cloud of dust, and was bowing for my reward when a little man not much larger than an Apache squaw came over with a coin in his hand and said, "My boy, let me see you hit this." Almost before I could get my gun into position he asked,

"Are you ready?" and threw the coin high in the air, twirling it as he did so.

I resented his interloping because I had attendants to throw my objects for me, but what could I do? The shot was a difficult one, for the coin whirled off sideways, and it was ten to one I would miss. I aimed hastily, and the coin zinged down—a fair hit.

"What a fluke!" exclaimed the little man, and you may imagine that this nettled me.

He dug another coin out of his pocket, saying this time: "You know as well as I do that that last shot was no test. Why, man, you were just lucky. You cannot do it again; not in a dozen years you cannot. Let me see you hit this coin, so I will be sure there is nothing of a fluke about your shooting."

He threw the coin high in the air, where it made a beautiful spiral to look at but a most difficult object to shoot at and hit. But I shot, and I hit that coin too.

"My word, another accident," cried my tormentor. "You are a lucky fellow right enough."

And then what did he do but fish a third coin from his pocket and tell me if I would hit that one he would be sure I was the greatest rifle shot in the world, as I had been claiming. "But I'll wager you cannot hit it," he added. "Are you ready?"

Now by this time I was what the Indians used to call "very bad medicine," meaning my temper had risen fully in the gorge and I was ready to fight. I made up my mind swiftly what I would do. If I missed that third coin, I would drop the muzzle of my gun, point it at the little man's middle and shoot him dead on the spot. He didn't know my reputation for losing my temper over nothing—that was clear. I could claim that I had shot him accidentally after it was all over; that I was befuddled by the crowd. Swiftly across my mind ran these thoughts.

As it happened, there was no need to commit homicide. When I fired, not believing I could by any chance hit that coin, I had the satisfaction of seeing it jump as an object hit in mid-air always does and fall obliquely to the ground.

Then the little Englishman came up to me with hand extended and a smile all over his face. He said: "Man, for twenty years I have been shooting and commanding shooting-men. The best shots on earth have been under me. But never have I seen such an exhibition as yours. I thought at first you were faking and I wanted to try you out. Now I know you are the most wonderful shot that ever lived. Give me your hand now, like a good fellow."

Afterward I learned he was Sir Robert Peel—Little Bob, they called him—and that he was a high officer in the Royal British Navy and one of the most popular men in England.

I remember one other time when I was luckier than any man ever was who shot for a living. It occurred in St. Paul during one of the fairs. Among the spectators was President Hayes, who was accompanied by Mrs. Hayes. Mrs. Hayes sent an attendant out to the field with a 25-cent piece to ask if I would shoot a hole through it for her for a keepsake.

I gallantly said I would not only shoot a hole through the coin, but would shoot right through the center and not damage the rim a particle. Now this was a piece of foolishness. To hit that coin at all while it was in the air was good shooting, and I knew it. To agree to hit it at any particular place was silly.

When the quarter was thrown up, the wind took a hand and carried it off sideways toward the box where the President and his lady sat. This was a pretty pickle for me. I aimed as well as I might and fired. *Ping!* The coin was hit. The momentum of the bullet and the force of the wind carried the coin right over and landed it in Mrs. Hayes' lap.

Thus I had shot a coin for her and delivered it, all with one bullet. When she examined it, she found it was shot directly through the center; that the rim was intact. A man with a drill and all instruments for measuring the center to drill his hole could not have pierced that coin more truly through the center. That was the best shot I ever made—but I did not make it. Luck did.

"You are the most accommodating gentleman I have ever known, Dr. Carver," Mrs. Hayes came to me and said at the termination of my exhibition.

She never knew how little credit I deserved, or indeed claimed, for earning that reputation in her eyes.

Yes, I will admit now that there were times when luck played a big part in my shooting exhibitions. I can recall one more that has always kept me humbled in the thought that were it not for luck I would never have had my reputation before the world as an infallible shot. This took place during my European tour in Germany.

The Kaiser Wilhelm I and 45,000 crack German soldiers were present. A rifle enthusiast himself, the Kaiser watched me closely. He expressed a wish he might own a coin I had shot, and he sent one over to me with the request that I shoot it for him. It proved to be the first 5-mark piece made during his reign and contained a bust of himself on one side.

I sent back the word, "I'll shoot your head off this coin, with your permission."

"You have my permission to do that," he replied.

With that coin whirling up there in the air, catching and experimenting with light rays at every turn, old Satan himself couldn't have seen the Kaiser's medallion. When the coin was retrieved and shown to the Kaiser, his whole head was missing. With this he was delighted. He removed a ring from his finger and sent it to me with his compliments. I own that ring yet. It was appraised at \$5,000 shortly after I returned from Europe.

Von Moltke was present at the exhibition. When it was all over, he came to me and said, "Oh, for an army of such as you!"

Every hunter has tales to tell of lucky shots at game. You have heard those stories, and some of them you have not believed. But for all your incredulity and your knowledge of what is possible in shooting, many of them might be true. One time Buffalo Bill Cody and I took a party of hunters out and performed some miracles of shooting. I never saw nor heard of such wonderful shots as we made. They were all pure luck. Our guests didn't know that, of course, and went back home mightily impressed by our skill. We didn't try to undeceive them.

The hunters we took out were a pair of Englishmen whose

names were Medley and Warren. I suppose they were Englishmen, for Cody said they were; but I always had a suspicion they were a couple of American tenderfeet from the East somewhere, whom Cody had picked up to show the wild and woolly West. They were surely a pair of the rawest tenderfeet who ever filled a boot. Neither had ever been hunting; neither, I believe, had ever fired a gun, but they were good fellows, and we all got along fine and had a lark of a time.

Cody, wishing to impress them, kept telling them of his prowess with a rifle and of mine. Some of his stories were pure fiction, and our guests were educated men with an acquaintance with fiction. They didn't believe all that was told them—that was sure. Cody came to me one day, perturbed, and said: "Doc, to save our face with these fellows we have to show them some shooting. You can shoot better than I. From now on, you do the shooting and I will continue the yarning, which they seem to enjoy even if they don't swallow everything I tell them."

One day we saw a pair of antelope grazing on a sidehill perhaps six or seven hundred yards away, perhaps a little farther. Medley said: "Cody, you have told me frequently of killing Indians a mile, two miles away, and here are two beasts you can imagine are Indians. They are a good target for you to shoot at."

"Oh, let Carver shoot them," Cody parried.

Then they would have nothing else than I should try to shoot those antelope, which was next to impossible at that distance. You read today of long shots made in those days, but put most of them down as fiction. Expert riflemen with modern equipment will tell you any shot above four or five hundred yards is just a chance when it hits. I am talking of game shots, mind you; not range shots at targets.

My arm that day was a .45-70 Springfield army gun. Hitting one of those antelope at that distance with that gun was as certain as dropping a golf ball into the cup from an airplane. But I got out of the wagon, held high over the antelope and pulled the trigger, saying as I did so, "Now you watch that lead antelope drop."

They all laughed when the antelope did not drop.

We started walking over to where Medley said he had seen the dust fly up, half-way between us and the game. I told him he was mistaken, but he was obdurate. I knew what had happened—the bullet had fallen short and hit the ground. But I still maintained I had killed the antelope. I told them that when we got over to where the antelope were they would find one of them shot right through the head. They laughed at that.

When we reached within a hundred paces of where the two antelope had been, only one was there, and he was lying down. As we came closer he got to his feet, bounded away a short distance, then dropped dead. We went over to examine him and found he was shot right through the head, just as I had said. Then did not I crow? But what I want to know is, what guided that bullet? Certainly I had little to do with it.

Next day Medley announced that we had never seen him shoot and had thereby missed something. He had a short-barreled English revolver of the type that look so dangerous in motion pictures of Scotland Yard but are actually no good at ranges over ten feet. He told Cody to set up a mark.

Cody took a ramrod and set an exploded cartridge on it about fifty yards away. Medley took no aim at this; just leveled the revolver and pulled the trigger. To my surprise, the cartridge jumped, squarely hit. That was by far the most marvelous shot I had ever seen.

I looked at the man with astonishment on my face. I had thought he was a tenderfoot. And yet even Wild Bill Hickok, whom I knew very intimately, never shot a revolver so well as that.

The shot was purely a fluke, we afterward learned. We had Medley shoot for us again and again, but he never hit a single mark after that first attempt. Conditions got so dangerous around camp from his shooting that we had to ask him not to practice any more.

I went into rifle-shooting as a profession in 1872, after leaving the plains for good. Rifle-shooting at that time was a famous sport

of the day. It was a profitable vocation, too, for a man who was adept at it. And it was easier by far than the profession I was renouncing—that of buffalo hunter, which was the hardest, dirtiest work in the world. I bought a blue suit and a pair of patent leather boots reaching up to my hips, took my old rifles and was all in readiness for the conquest of America.

In a few years I visited Europe on a shooting exhibition tour. In Ireland, England, Wales, France, Belgium, Austria and Hungary I gave exhibitions which some of my newspaper friends would describe by enthusiastic word ovations.

I have recounted one of my experiences in England and one in Germany. The next day after I shot for the Kaiser, he sent to my hotel and asked if I would consent to give a private exhibition for the royal family. Naturally, I said I would be delighted. There were four generations of German emperors present, besides many court and military notables.

These Germans were surely more interested in shooting than any other nation. Whenever I would make a direct hit, they would loudly applaud; and when I was all through, they came on to the field and sought to know what my secret was. After this exhibition, Crown Prince Frederick presented me with a diamond stickpin that had a letter F inside a letter V, standing for "Frederick and Victoria."

In Russia I gave an exhibition before the Czar and Czarina, Grand Dukes Sergus and Paul, Duchess Vladimir and the Queen of Greece. The Czar gave me a pin of rubies and diamonds and asked me to come back to Russia, which I never did.

My invasion of Europe was successful. Shooting glass balls, I found, was more profitable than shooting buffaloes, and ever so much pleasanter. When I set foot in America again, I had about \$100,000 in cash and gifts worth \$125,000 to show for my work—not bad for an old plainsman, I thought.

Most of my shooting has been with the rifle. Now and then I have used a shotgun, enough to have won and kept a string of championships, but I never claimed that was my excellence. Rifle-shooting was. Often I used to compete with men using shotguns,

I using a rifle and shooting at flying targets. I handicapped myself every time I did it, of course, but usually managed somehow to win in spite of the handicap.

In America I had one bitter rival for years in Captain A. H. Bogardus, who called himself the "World's Champion Shot" at the same time I was calling myself that. This situation called for a showdown. We had twenty-five shooting matches in various parts of the country, and I won twenty-three of them. Still he went on using his self-given title.

One kind of shooting Captain Bogardus specialized in was endurance shooting. He was fitted for this by nature because he had a wonderful physique and great vitality. I thought myself not lacking in these things either. That I was a match for him in anything he tackled I never doubted, I was that confident of myself in those days. We were rivals for several years, running even for a while in our bitterness, each giving out about the same number of newspaper interviews in which he unmercifully traduced the other.

Then one day Bogardus decided to end things once for all. He announced he had broken the world's record for endurance shooting by breaking 5,000 glass balls in eight hours. The press of the country said next day, "The record will stand forever."

A week later I offered to shoot 5,500 glass balls in five hundred minutes, just enough to go Bogardus one better. I did it. Then his record wasn't worth an exploded cartridge. He said he would shoot 6,000 balls, and he did that. And then did I not wax foolish? I announced that I would be willing to wager \$10,000 I could break 60,000 glass balls in six days—10,000 a day.

This was the height of foolishness. The press said no man could stand the strain. Since no one was taking my offer seriously, I decided I would go ahead and show them it could be done anyway, and I arranged, in 1885, to start my first six-day shoot at New Haven, Connecticut, then my home.

My memory of that first six-day shoot is dim, but it will never be entirely effaced. If my own recollection is fuzzy from time, accounts of the "entertainment," as it was referred to in the

newspapers, which appeared in the press are the same today as they were then. Let me quote for you what some of them had to say. Here is one from the old *Forest and Stream*, a weekly sportsman's magazine, of January 22, 1885:

"Doc. W. F. Carver spent last week in a prolonged fusillade, and sustained his reputation as a marksman of exceptional ability by winning his offer to hit 60,000 flying objects within six days' time.

"The test took place in Lincoln's Rink, New Haven, Conn., where the electric lights blazed forth in all their glory and knots of Dr. Carver's admirers stood about the building and discussed the marksman's chances of accomplishing the destruction of thirteen tons of coal within six days. . . .

"The rink was crowded all day, and as soon as the dust and dirt caused by the coal shooting of early morning was swept up, the crowds increased."

Let me add here that the destruction of thirteen tons of coal mentioned by the reporter was not accomplished. We found the first hour that coal would not do. Whenever a piece was hit, it turned to dust. That large rink building became very soon as smoky as a cannon's mouth. It filled my eyes, it filled my nostrils, it filled my mouth, it filled my lungs. As long as that was all it filled, everything was satisfactory. But as soon as the dust began wafting toward the spectators they kicked to the manager, who came hastily to me and asked if we couldn't substitute some other target. For that very contingency we had provided some wooden blocks, they suffered from then on.

The same reporter says further:

"The score at the end of the first day was: Hits, 11,089; misses, 3,018. He is ahead of his quota. Bravo."

The account from this point on tells boldly what took place during each day, how at the end of every one I had reached my quota or passed a little above it, and how the shoot was wearing on my physical condition. On the last day, the account tells dramatically of the end in these words:

"The end came with a good deal of enthusiasm on the part of

the public and a seeming willingness to go on shooting forever on the part of the chief actor. His eyes were sunk back in his head, his hair fell negligently about his shoulders, his countenance was blackened and begrimed with powder.

"At twenty minutes past seven the shots numbered 62,108—misses, 4,773; hits, 57,335. At half-past eight he had fired 63,625 shots, with 4,806 misses, and 58,819 hits. At twenty minutes past nine the score was—shots, 64,125; misses, 4,832; hits, 59,293. Every one was now keeping tally, and at twelve minutes to ten every one said, 'Enough, enough!' The scorer shouted: 'Hits, 60,016—4,865 misses and 64,881 shots.' The sixteen were thrown in for good measure."

One of the reporters of the *New Haven Sunday Union* had an engineering talent, for he figured out mathematically what the shoot meant to the shooter. His calculations are so convincing that it is lucky I didn't come across them before the shoot started. Likely it would never have started.

Here is what he found when he applied his mathematics:

"To carry out what he proposes to do he will have to lift a 10-pound rifle to his shoulder, providing he hits every piece of coal, 10,000 times a day, which is equivalent to lifting 100,000 pounds, or 50 tons, a day.

"Further than this, in loading the gun a pressure of 48 pounds is required to work the lever which, by a sum in simple arithmetic, shows that if a pressure of 48 pounds is required to work this lever, the strain on Dr. Carver's right hand will be 480,000 pounds a day, and for a week, 2,880,000 pounds.

"Now if in shooting he raises the 10-pound rifle 10,000 times a day, at the close of the week he will have lifted 600,000 pounds—300 tons."

I had always boasted that my strength and endurance were that of two or three men. When I was a young fellow out on the plains, I never found a man who could match me in strength. Until I went into this six-day business, I had not known what being tired meant. But there it didn't take me long to find out.

The first day I had no trouble; it seemed easy. The second was

a little bit harder. By the end of the third, I was sure I could hardly go on. My left arm gave out from lifting the rifle. My arm became partially paralyzed the third day and remained so until three weeks after the shoot was over. I never knew how I finished that week.

My practice was to start in about the middle of the morning, when the crowd would be gathered, and shoot right on through till early evening. Then I would retire to my home, get supper, rest half an hour, and go back and shoot until midnight. I would try to sleep after that. But sleep for me would not come. All night long I kept shooting coal and wooden blocks.

During the week I lost thirty pounds in weight. It took me months to feel that I was fully recovered from the strain. I decided then, and announced my decision, that there would be no more six-day shoots for me. If any one wanted my record, it was his if he could earn it. I would take no steps to defend it myself. That record is as safe today as it was in 1885, because no one has ever even attempted to take it from me. I believe truly it is a record that will always stand. It has never even been approached by another man.

Soon the endurance fever gripped me again, however, and it was irresistible. I gave way to the urge, arranged to put another six-day shoot on in Minneapolis, and went up there for that purpose in 1888. Here I succeeded as I had in New Haven, but did not find the second attempt one whit easier than the first. Indeed it was a little harder, if anything. The hours seemed longer; the count ever so much slower.

After the Minneapolis shoot I went around the country giving shooting exhibitions or managing one of the Wild West Shows which I have at various times owned. In rifle-shooting I was absolutely without opponents. I took the title of "Champion Rifle Shot," advertised myself as such and asked for contests. I can truthfully say no man has ever accepted a challenge of mine to compete with the rifle. Some of the things I did will probably never be duplicated; some of my records will probably never be approached.

II

I began experimenting with hip-shooting while I was still on the plains, and believe I am the originator of that style of shooting. In all history, few men have mastered it besides myself. Probably the reason is that it takes so many years of practice to become competent in its use.

In hip-shooting I would hold the rifle against my hip instead of raising it to the shoulder. Instead of aiming with sights I would glance at the object I wished to hit, then at the end of my barrel, and line up the two and pull the trigger. Hitting even large objects from the hip is a difficult art, as any rifleman will tell you once he tries it. But nevertheless I became so adept at it that I could shoot almost as well from the hip as from the shoulder. The cost was tremendous. It took me years of practice and several carloads of ammunition.

Today there are some riflemen who scoff at the idea that I was ever able to shoot accurately from the hip. They have told me frankly that no man could do it. But I have done it, and I know. Just because the average rifleman cannot shoot that way he concludes neither can any other rifleman, and that conclusion is final. But this is not logical thinking. I have plenty of testimony that I could hit what I shot at from the hip.

Not long ago a writer said in one of the magazines that Buffalo Bill had told him hip-shooting was a myth. That a writer should denounce hip-shooting doesn't surprise me—they have been doing it for years—but that he should take as his authority Buffalo Bill Cody does surprise me some. Buffalo Bill must have forgotten the day I took his and Texas Jack's buckskin coats away from them on a shooting wager.

That was in 1872. Bill and Jack were making ready to go east with their play, "Scouts of the Plains," and I had come to the fort to see them off. We fell to discussing shooting, as plainsmen always did. I told the boys I had been practicing a new way to shoot, and then I explained hip-shooting to them.

"But you can't hit nothing that way," Bill insisted.

"I can hit as much that way as you can using sights from the shoulder," I replied.

Texas Jack sided with Cody. They offered to bet me their buckskin coats, worth probably \$5 apiece, against mine. It was a three-way bet. Whoever came closest to the mark got the three coats.

We set up a mark fifty yards away. Bill took his army rifle, a .45-70 with 30-inch barrel—a regular lodge pole of a gun—and shot first. He was never an exceptional shot in his best days; so Texas Jack easily beat him. Then I shot and beat both of them—shot from the hip, as I said I would. They turned their coats over to me.

"Now let's go get Belden," Texas Jack said. "Sure thing, Belden will want to shoot against Doc here."

Lieutenant Belden—I have forgotten his initials—was a squawman from around Fort McPherson and about the best shot in the country. With his old Hawkens muzzle-loader he had won many matches from the hide-hunters and the soldiers. The eagerness of my two friends was divided between a desire to see Belden beaten and a desire to see me beaten.

We went over to the sutler's where Belden was spinning big yarns. Bill told him Doc Carver was here and was spoiling for a match with him. Carver would shoot from the hip, Belden from the shoulder. Carver would use an ordinary issue needle-gun, Belden his old pet Hawkens. Belden forgot his place in his yarn, and asked to talk to me personally.

"What will you shoot for?" he questioned.

Cody answered him: "You have five horses and a saddle. Doc has the same. Why don't you shoot for them?"

And so it was agreed. Belden insisted on seeing the horses and having them all tied together and held by his Indian brother-in-law. He apologized: "I want to make sure of getting them, Carver, after winning them. You understand?"

We shot this time at a hundred paces. Belden, though he was a fine shot, lost to me. He started off afoot for a ranch where his squaws were. As he went away he handed me his Hawkens rifle

and said: "Here, Carver, you take this to boot. It's no good to me now. I won't ever shoot another muzzle-loader."

When I left Nebraska that old Hawkens was standing in my sod house, no good to anybody.

General Phil Sheridan was the army man who was most interested in my hip-shooting. In 1872, when we were on the Duke Alexis hunt together, I showed it to him. He asked me to teach him how to shoot that way. I tried to do this, but found he had not the patience it took to master the art. After a few days' trial he came up to me and told me to do the shooting while he did the watching, an arrangement we followed satisfactorily to both of us from then on.

In 1883, when Buffalo Bill and I were in the show business as partners and were showing at Driving Park, Chicago, General Sheridan brought a party of army friends out to see me shoot. He had been telling tales on me, and it was clear to me that his friends hadn't believed all they had heard. But they were perfectly astounded at the way I hit small objects from the hip. At fifty yards I fired sixteen shots into a post, and they all went into a hole that could be covered by the hand.

I tried to teach Buffalo Bill hip-shooting when we were together as showmen, but he was not a very apt scholar. Wild Bill Hickok was a friend of mine when he was at his best as a shot. He couldn't learn hip-shooting either. When we were practicing, he would look at me as if to say, "How does that man do it, anyway?" I did give him some pointers about shooting, however, which I am sure saved his life on three occasions at least, but I never could teach him how to shoot from the hip.

In all my contests I used only one gun—an old Model '73 Winchester of .44 caliber. It was a sweet old weapon, and I loved it. In my six-day contests I had some .22-caliber rifles built on the '73 frame. I used the .22's a good deal for hip-shooting, too, because they didn't jump so. The rifles weighed about nine pounds each. The only powder we had in those days was black powder, and I want you to believe me when I tell you it was surely black and smoky.

I used to manipulate those levers so fast that I had some trouble with the guns exploding. This happened on several occasions. The last time it happened, as I have recorded, I was blind for three weeks, and decided it was time I sought another profession.

My equipment would be scoffed at by the riflemen of today, who would tell you my gun lacked range, accuracy and killing-power. Part of that is true—that part about the range—but for accuracy and killing-power I would choose the old .44 in preference to many guns made and sold today and called modern. I would choose the same equipment if I were to go shooting today; not because there aren't better guns today, but simply because I would pick out what I was accustomed to.

Guns have improved wonderfully in my lifetime. I often conjecture what would have happened if we could have had modern high-power rifles out on the buffalo ranges. Buffalo hunting would have been a business then!

I always used just plain sights or no sights at all. I pointed more than I sighted in shooting, always when shooting from the hip of course and much of the time when shooting from the shoulder. Sights never made a rifleman—never will. While good sighting equipment helps, the human equation is really the thing in rifle shooting.

Many tried, of course, to imitate my shooting. One man in particular was persistent in calling himself a better shot than I. But he never would meet me in a contest; so I had no doubts about which of us was the better shot.

This man went about the country advertising himself supreme with firearms. One day I went to watch him shoot. He used my old stunt of shooting with a rifle glass balls thrown into the air. He did hit them regularly—I shall say that for him—but the way they broke made me suspect he was using shot instead of a single ball. I wrote the rifle people and asked them to quote me a price on the kind of rifle he used. This is their reply:

“Replying to your letter of recent date, will say we can make you a rifle such as used by the rifleman you mention. It is our

standard .50 caliber, bored smooth to shoot shot. He pays us \$100 for a gun. Hoping to be favored with your order."

The *Chicago Tribune* of April 27, 1893, contained a reference to this same shooter which it amuses me to read over now and then when I am digging through my scrap-books in search of memories. He has long been dead, so that revealing his trickery and identifying him with it would do no one any good. The *Tribune* item read:

"He handled his firearms as well as of old. He broke numerous clay pigeons with so-called rifle bullets. There was a peculiar coincidence, however, that at each crack of the rifle numerous pellets rattled down on the roof of the grandstand, leading many to believe he was shooting shot."

Many have asked me how the marksmen of today would compare with the old-time plainsmen I used to know. That is a question I don't like to answer. I have my own ideas on this subject. Some argue with unassailable logic that as mechanical equipment has so improved, the modern shooter ought to shoot bull's-eyes around the old-timer with his crude equipment. And you would naturally think so. But remember that the old-timer had one thing in his favor that no modern shooter has: he had more practice.

I think that the riflemen of my day would outshoot the present-day riflemen at short ranges, mind you, in spite of your better equipment and your more accurate rifles; not because your guns aren't better, but because your training wasn't so good as ours. I doubt if many modern shooters have the opportunity to become a proficient shot that the average man had in my day.

My own life is typical of the lives of other boys on the frontier where I was reared. When I was only four years old, I began shooting, under the supervision of my father, of course, who had to hold the rifle because it was too heavy. I kept it up, shooting some practically every day until I had grown to manhood. I fired millions of rounds of ammunition. I practiced, practiced, practiced.

Your modern rifleman, if he shoots ten thousand rounds during

a lifetime, has shot more than nine-tenths of the men who claim to be good shots and have local reputations for being experts.

Of course, at longer distances we would have no chance against the riflemen of today, because our arms were not long-distance arms. You read of the long shots made by the plainsmen, but you can put most of them down as pure fakes. Mechanically it wasn't possible for us to kill game at such long ranges. At any range up to two hundred yards, however, we usually managed to give a pretty good account of ourselves.

Practice is the thing that makes a good rifleman, and practice is indispensable. No man was ever a good shot without it. I practiced for years to attain quickness in shooting. In time I became wonderfully adept and could work the lever of my old rifle so fast that it sounded for all the world like a modern automatic.

Often I have fired out over a lake, shooting six times before the first bullet hit the water. I have shot three objects in the air at the same time, and have hit two or three chunks of coal after throwing one large piece into the air and breaking it into smaller ones by my first shot. That takes practice.

One of my favorite stunts—I showed this to General Sheridan—was to single out an old buffalo bull on the plains about two hundred yards away and shoot six bullets at him as fast as I could work the lever. Then I would drop the butt of my rifle to the ground before the first bullet hit him. I could count those bullets hitting his old hide just as fast as you could clap your hands, each one knocking up puffs of dust.

You cannot do shooting like that without practice—without unending practice. Nothing will supplant practice in shooting. And that is a lesson for you modern riflemen to learn.

In my earlier days I used to shoot with shotgun, rifle and pistol, and thought myself supreme with all three. But soon I learned that if I wanted to be a great rifle shot I would have to forego practicing much with a shotgun. It spoiled me for rifle shooting to shoot much with a shotgun; so I gave up the shotgun entirely.

I also learned from experience that I had to use the same kind

of rifle if I wanted to do my best. I was in the habit of using several different types and weights of rifles. Some were long-barreled single shots, some repeaters, some short carbines. All had different weights, different balances, and required different amounts of muscle and nerve energy to use. That was ruining my expertness. I discovered I had to standardize on one, which I did.

My dear old friend Diamond Dick Tanner—now known to the world as Dr. Richard M. Tanner of Norfolk, Nebraska—was without question the greatest pistoleer the world has ever produced or likely will ever produce. He was the most masterful man with a pistol I ever saw, and I knew Wild Bill Hickok and others of the great men of the frontier.

Diamond Dick and I used to shoot much together a few years ago. One day I asked him to what he owed his success, and he told me it was to his concentrating on one particular type of arm and using nothing but that. He had his pair of pistols and would use no other. He had learned the same thing I had learned about shooting—that a man can't be an expert with every gun that comes along.

One time I spent two weeks with Wild Bill Hickok down in the Boston mountains camping, just we two together. Wild Bill was always one of my closest friends, and I thought a good deal of him. He was a wonderful man, by the way—not a murderous killer, as he is pictured. There is a story about Wild Bill that has never been told. He has been misrepresented by his biographers. Some day I may get around to showing a picture of the real Wild Bill, which will surprise many students of frontier history.

When Hickok and I camped together, I learned what many men couldn't understand—the baffling secret of his skill with pistols. It was, after all, very simple. He practiced more than the others did. Every day we would go out and practice shooting. By the hour he would shoot his pistols empty, then reload them, then shoot them empty again. He told me then that he could shoot quicker and straighter than other men because he practiced more than other men did.

And now you have my answer to the question of whether there

are as good shots today as there used to be. There would be more if men had the practice which was a part of our life out on the plains. I don't think for a minute that the art of shooting was given to my generation alone. It is purely a matter of practice. I wouldn't be satisfied to say that it was only a matter of practice, for I believe that an aptitude for shooting must be present first.

The recipe for a great rifle shooter, then, is to take a man with a natural aptitude for shooting, give him a carload of ammunition, require him to practice every day for years and years, and the result will be a rifle genius. Such a man might be seized with an ambition to break my six-day record. If he is, I hope he succeeds in the undertaking. No man should punish himself so severely without some satisfaction or reward.

ELK OF THE THOROFARE¹

Hunting in the spot Buffalo Bill picked

By BOB NICHOLS

HOW COULD I help it if I have a pair of flabby lungs and a ticker that is none too good? The man doesn't live who can bounce out of soft and easy office life in a sea-level city, and in four days' time adjust his inside "workings" to high, mountainous country—so high that you've got to keep brushing your hair all day long up there because the angels' wings rumple it as they fly by. That's the Thorofare country of Wyoming.

Out of Cody, up into the Shoshone Valley, up through the Shoshone Forest, over the continental back-bone at Deer Creek Pass, and then down through the Teton National Forest along Thorofare Creek, clean west to the Yellowstone River—this is the Thorofare country of Wyoming, the spot that Buffalo Bill picked. What a picker the old boy was!

As I say, how could I help it if I had a pair of flabby lungs and a fluttering ticker that couldn't stand the gaff?

For three long days, Perry and I had horsebacked up and down the Blind Basin country, skirting carefully the edge of the big timber, ever on the alert for elk, bear and moose. But a big blizzard ten days before had sent the earliest migrating herds of elk on their way down into the Jackson Hole country, and apparently the bears had thought it high time to hibernate. It was not until

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the end of the third wonderful day that I got my chance—with sunset just in the offing, and after heart-breaking climbs over down timber through the big forest, up over ridges, sometimes where the snow lay three or four feet deep, frequently going up sharp steep inclines where I was forced to the degradation of holding fast to the tail of Perry's horse in the lead, while holding weakly onto the bridle of my own mount and leading it in the rear.

Just as we were on the homeward stretch, down that unforgettable cañon of Falcon Creek—just as the long finger-like shadows of the great firs began to stretch farther and farther east in the glow of the western sun—Perry carefully drew his horse to a halt. He had done the same thing a dozen times—two dozen times—during the day, so that I was only mildly interested; but when, slowly and deliberately, he slid from the saddle and unbuttoned his binoculars from the pommel, I experienced a growing thrill of excitement.

Perry's slow deliberation with the binoculars was maddening. Then he turned back to his horse and held up a warning three fingers to me.

"Three bulls," he whispered.

And right then began the stalk that wound up—but wait a minute! I am starting in at the middle of my story instead of at the beginning. I was about to slip my .30 caliber out of its scabbard and adjust the telescope before telling you how I got to that spot.

Just a week before, almost to the hour, I had boarded the train out of New York, encumbered with traveling and duffel bags and no less than three rifles, two in the .30-06 caliber and a .270. The latter rifle was doomed to get very thoroughly busted up when my horse went down in going over fallen timber made slippery by deep snow.

Scabbarded to the rear, the butt hit smack-bang into the bole of a pine, and the impact pressure was too great. She snapped off at the grip. But all this happened afterward; what I want to tell you about now is how I got down into the Thorofare country.

Please bear with me while I make a second start. The trouble is, that dog-goned Wyoming country is so big and so full of a number of things that you are bound to get ahead of your story whichever way you talk about it. It's too big for one man to talk about; you need a chorus to do it justice.

Not so very many hours after I left New York, I found myself skimming along through the desolate Dakotas, enjoying all the comfort those crack transcontinental trains have to offer. Some time later, very early in the morning, I was set down in Billings, Montana; thence by train down to Frannie, Wyoming; thence, via the Diesel-motored "Gallopig Goose," forty miles more down to Cody. There was still another forty-mile motor trip out of Cody, on up into the Shoshone River Valley. Larry, my host, and I knocked about town for a spell of three or four hours, making last-minute purchases. I bought myself a pair of those Pendleton breeches (which I didn't need at all, but which I couldn't resist buying); also, I procured my Duck Stamp, for I was assured of some duck shooting down along the Yellowstone River if we got that far.

What I like most about Cody is the Irma Hotel. This is Buffalo Bill's own hotel, built by him and named for his daughter. The old hostelry reeks of the atmosphere of men who are gone but not forgotten. Some of them no doubt went with their boots on. The darkened interior of the lobby faintly shows walls lined with painted scenes and figures of the West of half a century ago. The ceiling of the old bar is perforated in a dozen or more places with .45 slugs from the gun muzzles of some of the hilarious and lusty lads of long ago who just wanted to whoopee and be playful-like.

Cody, be it known, has a mighty colorful background. They do say that the boys cut up something scandalous out there during the annual Cody round-up, July 3, 4 and 5, and even today a bit of gun play is not entirely unexpected before the festivities have run their course.

After completing our sundry purchases, Larry and I clambered in the car over rifles and dunnage and were soon putting miles

behind us in the long climb up to the Shoshone Valley—up, up, up, past the old TE ranch of Buffalo Bill, and thence on down to the Lazy JD Ranch at Valley. Just as we were rattling into the home stretch, a lone eagle crossed the winding road ahead of us, flying low, and calmly lit on top of a stubby telephone pole, there to search the ground carefully, utterly contemptuous of our presence, watching for perhaps a rabbit he had caught a glimpse of a moment before. A few minutes later, as the glory of the Shoshone Valley broke out ahead of us, there below us, not over three hundred yards away, stood a small group of antelope.

So this, I thought to myself, is Wyoming!

Late into the night, Larry and I sat in my cabin talking. Seventy-three next morning the mellow-toned ranch-bell summoned all to breakfast, and two hours later we were on our way up, up, ever up, in slow zigzagging course, to the cloud-high, snow-covered back-bone of the Continental Divide over Deer Creek Pass.

The snake-like progress of a twenty-nine-head string of horses makes a pretty picture winding in and out and ever up the steep mountainside—six saddle horses, three spares and twenty head carrying their diamond-hitched, tarpaulin-covered “panniards” on pack saddles. There was Charlie, my hunting companion; his guide, Carl; Perry, who guided me; Ernie, who is a first-class guide in his own right but, just because there was nothing much to lay his hand to in this late October season, was playing the temporary role of horse wrangler; with good old red-shirted and sombreroed Jonesie bringing up the rear, hazing the hindmost stragglers in the pack-train and keeping the winding chain of horse-flesh from breaking.

I rode at the head of the string with Carl on the way up to the Pass, just on the chance that we might run across a late-season grizzly. Half-way up the mountainside a fine buck and three does regarded us suspiciously from clumps of sage-brush. Had that buck shown himself a few hours later, when we were near our first camping stop down in the Blind Basin, we surely would have had fresh venison steaks for supper. But, things being as they were,

we passed him up and presently watched them bounce jauntily farther up the mountainside and into a timbered ravine.

"How far up to the Pass?" I asked Carl.

"About four to five hours," he replied.

Right there I learned that a mountain man never measures a journey in miles. It is always in hours. The only definite measurement in tangible units that I could get was that the valley floor was at about the 5,500-foot level, while the Pass was 11,500 feet. At any rate, we traveled upward well over a mile during that circuitous climb. And what a climb it was! A narrow winding trail that in places clung to the rim of a narrow gorge from which only faintly, far below, came the hushed roar of tumbling water. You could stand in the stirrups and spit over your shoulder clean down to China. The sure-footed little horses carefully picked their way, winding in and out and ever up—until along about one-thirty we came out on the high, deeply snow-covered trail that looped over the back-bone of the world at Deer Creek Pass. Here the footing was so insecure that, to be safe, one got off and walked, leading his horse. The last hundred yards came so near busting my lungs that I afterward told the boys that I clearly envisioned a modest head-line in the home papers: "Shooting Editor Crosses Continental Divide and 'Great Divide' at Same Instant." But, somehow or other, my bellows and pump held up, and from there on it was more or less downhill all the rest of the way. Which had my approval.

We made our first camp that evening in the Blind Basin. A heavy, wet snow was falling. It was dark before the tents were pitched. Jonesie's big kitchen tent went up first, and in a matter of minutes his stove was set up, blazing with warmth, and the ever-ready coffee pot made its cheering rounds. A quarter of moose was lowered from its pine-tree perch, cached there two weeks previous, and boy-oh-boy, didn't those broiled steaks taste like something!

Dozing behind the hot stove, with the steam rising in clouds from my wet clothes, I stayed awake just long enough to hear Jonesie's story of how he took \$5,900 worth of marten and fox out

of this country in the trapping season of 1917. Snows were six feet deep. Food was short. Even the candles gave out along toward the end, and the two trapping partners had to resort to the flickering smoky light afforded by bear-grease "bitches." A "bitch," just in case you don't know, is a square of rag with a rock tied in the center of it and set in a pan of bear grease.

Then, just as I was almost too drowsy to register another impression, I faintly remember the beginning of Jonesie's tale of the four dangedest-best mules he ever drove. It seems the names of the illustrious quartet were: Whoopin' Annie, Whistlin' Elk, Peter Pan and Polly Ann. Jonesie was no ordinary mule skinner. He never carried a whip. Just gathered a can of rocks, took them up on the wagon seat beside him and bounced 'em off the heads of Whoopin' Annie, Whistlin' Elk, Peter Pan and Polly Ann at the most appropriate moment, and . . . But right at the moment, I must have fallen asleep. I'm sure I missed a swell yarn.

Next morning, bright and early, Perry and I set off up Blind Basin cañon. A little group of three cow elk was browsing high above the rim-rock, scarcely discernible with the naked eye. The Clark crows squawked harshly in the quiet stillness that follows a heavy, wet snow. A three-inch blanket covered the ground.

As we wound our way up the cañon and across the meadows, a pair of eagles flapped up heavily from a moose carcass. The great birds were so heavy from their feeding that they could scarcely get into the air, and one passed so close over my head that I could have killed it with my pistol had I been so minded. There is a common belief that the eagle is a harsh enemy to the lambs of wild mountain sheep. Of the truth of this I have little doubt.

That day was uneventful as far as bull elk were concerned. But coming down the cañon in the early evening, Perry spotted a bull moose a thousand yards down the meadow and traveling slowly toward us; so we pulled our horses more deeply into the timber and waited.

"Little fellow," said Perry. "Too little to shoot."

Down-wind he came toward us. Now he was within a hundred

yards, giving a deep belly-grunt every half-dozen paces to assure himself and the world at large that he was a big tough boy and would brook no monkey business from any other antlered swain in the whole of the Blind Basin. When he was within sixty yards of us, my horse gave a soft snort and the young bull leaped a dozen feet and whirled toward us, head down. I slid from my horse leaving my rifle in the saddle scabbard. I started to walk toward him. I walked slowly, without any quick or hurried movement. This seemed to baffle him.

He watched me coming in a sort of fixed fascination, never moving. When I got within about forty yards of him, the hair on his neck went straight up. Another step or two, and he could no longer stand the pressure. He snorted and whirled off ten to fifteen yards, and then again turned to face me. I repeated my performance. Again he went through his part of the act. After his third stand, it suddenly occurred to me that I was getting entirely too far away from the horses and handy timber; so I turned and started back.

As I looked over my right shoulder it was with some slight consternation that I saw he had started following in a slow walk that matched my own pace! I think he was overwhelmingly fascinated by the scarlet cloth I had knotted around my collar, in compliance with the Wyoming big-game hunting laws. He followed me for perhaps twenty yards; then, as if confident he had won his victory, or perhaps only having satisfied a consuming curiosity, he turned and went his way up the wide, brushy meadow.

To this day, I don't know why I did that. Just a dumb lark—maybe more than a little foolhardy. But I think I figured that if it came to a rush from him, I could beat him to the timber. Now—on more mature reflection—I don't doubt in the least that I was greatly over-rating my prowess as a sprinter. In fact, I know danged well I was.

Worst of all—I didn't have a camera with me that day. But I was to have a later experience with a bull moose—a much bigger one—that I didn't feel the least bit cocksure about. But

this was down in the Bridger Lake country, and I'll tell you more about that later.

Jonesie claims that a bull moose in deep snow will charge you invariably rather than get off the trail.

"And a dog-gone old range cow, dragged out from where she is bogged down, will charge you nine times out of ten," observes Perry in agreement.

From that first day's hunt, it was clearly evident that the vanguard of the migrating elk herd had moved farther south, down toward the Jackson Hole country. So, bright and early the third day we broke camp, trailed our way back over the down timber to Thorofare Creek, thence on down to the Yellowstone meadows at Bridger Lake. It was here we pitched our second camp, and what a beautiful spot it was! Across the little lake, seeming to rise precipitously from the far shore, frowned the sheer granite wall of Hawk's Nest. And it was here at Bridger Lake that, in a single day, I caught cut-throat trout, killed a mess of mallards and golden-eyes, gathered a handful of jack-snipe, had two flocks of honkers come over me when I was plumb out of shells—and, to cap the climax, ran smack-dab into the biggest bull moose I saw on the whole trip, with an estimated spread of approximately fifty inches, which I still deemed too small to shoot. What a day!

The following day, after pitching our tents on the shore of Bridger, Perry and I rode up into the Falcon Creek country, where just before sunset we spotted the three pink ghosts that subsequently led to bagging my first head of Wyoming big game. Having sighted the three bulls, hurriedly we tethered our horses and began a stalk of perhaps two hundred and fifty yards. Moving as swiftly as we could, stooping low and running when screened by ground-brush in the edge of the timber, and wriggling along on our bellies in spots where the cover was thin, we finally arrived at good shooting range.

The three finely antlered bulls had by this time slipped into a timber draw, which enforced a few moments' waiting, during which welcome moments I labored hard trying to catch my breath and stop the erratic pounding of my heart. Three pink ghosts

emerged from the timber on the far side of the cañon and headed, moving steadily, into the setting sun. It was a beautiful picture, and when I call them pink ghosts I actually mean they did look pink in the last level rays of red sunlight.

The nearest bull was at a range which I thought was about two hundred yards. However, by this time I had learned that it is no use trying to rely on what one is pleased to call his judgment in estimating distance out in that country. A half hour later I was ready to change my mind, and agree with Perry that the range was a good three hundred yards at least; however, that's still very easy range on an animal the size of a very sizable bull elk. Or at least it should be easy!

"Take the near one," whispered Perry. "He seems to have the best head of the three anyhow."

Having already slipped my telescope from its scabbard and attached it to my rifle, I leveled off, pulled the top of the post up on the center of his shoulder and squeezed off. The report came like a thunderclap, and rolled back and forth from rim-rock to rim-rock in that quiet cañon. The bull gave a heavy lurch, dropped half-way to his knees, straightened up and started moving slowly but steadily on his way.

"You're shootin' low," Perry whispered, watching the point of impact through his binoculars.

I scarcely heard what he said. In fact, I think I did hear him plainly, but was so sure of my hold that I scarcely gave heed to what he said.

Hastily slamming another cartridge into the chamber, again I squeezed off the trigger. Again that deafening report, but no apparent change in the onward movement of the elk.

"You're shootin' low," again came from Perry, this time more insistent.

At that, I woke up out of my bullheadedness with consternation. Slamming a third cartridge into the chamber, I pulled high up on the shoulder and again let drive.

"Still a little low," said Perry.

Hell's bells! In desperation I jacked in the fourth shell and held

what seemed at least ten inches above the line of his back at the shoulder. Again the rifle spat out its thunderous echo and re-echo between the mile-apart cañon walls—and at the crash of the gun my first bull elk, the Pink Ghost of Falcon Creek, went down like a poled ox.

Twenty minutes later, after Perry had gone back to fetch up the horses, and while the purple shadows more and more enveloped the cañon, we rode circuitously down the steep hillside, crossed the creek, and made our way back to where my royal game lay. And it was not until then that I knew where my four bullets had struck. The first two, through the upper foreleg and lungs, you could cover with your hand; the third shot hit about four inches higher and ten inches back of the foreleg; and the fourth and finishing shot hit just underneath and partly wrecked the spine at the shoulder.

I was not surprised to note that nary a single one of those four 220-grain express bullets had gone completely through. The tough, rubbery hide had caught one coming out on the opposite side, the second shot I think it was, and had yielded enough under the impact actually to catch and stop the bullet after it had come out of the flesh. With my jack-knife I slit the heavy hide and plucked it out.

Next day in camp, after targeting my rifle, I knew for a certainty that my low shooting was my own danged fault, not the telescope's. Sitting on a down-hill incline, with my knees lower than my accustomed sitting position, and with lungs heaving and heart pounding, I had simply yanked my trigger and pulled the muzzle low on each shot. A damning admission for a shooting editor to make, but you're entitled to the truth; so there she is!

Working swiftly against the growing darkness, Perry and I dressed out the game, and cut pine boughs to cover the gaping slit in the belly to keep birds from disturbing it. Then, as the finishing touch, Perry unwound the red scarf from his throat and knotted it around the great up-standing royal point on the antlers, to keep the coyotes away in case our kill got snowed in and couldn't be reached for three or four days. A coyote won't come near your

kill for at least two days on account of the lingering man-smell. But after that, only the fluttering red flag of the hunter's scarf will keep your game safe from him.

We found our horses, mounted, and slowly rode down the cañon in the gathering gloom. As I looked back it seemed to me that fluttering red flag was a signal at half-mast—a salute of honor to a noble monarch.

It was long after dark when we cleared the mouth of the timbered cañon. Letting our horses pick out the trail with the sure instinct of homing pigeons, we rode our way across the mile-wide Yellowstone meadows toward the glow of our camp fire, which beckoned us cheerily through the inky blackness. Scenting home and freedom from further arduous duty, our little horses broke into a fast gallop, their hoofs thudding softly on the rank turf, and within half an hour we were in camp.

And then to the table, summoned by Jonesie's sturdy whanging on a skillet with a stick of stove-wood and his cheery call: "Come and get it, dang ye!"

II

We had just climbed to the crest of the wooded strip that separates the Pool from Bridger Lake. I was puffing along in front, carrying a brace of mallards and the funny little sawed-off Wells-Fargo 12-gauge pump that Larry had lent me before I left the ranch. Good old red-shirted Jonesie was trudging along behind with four more mallards in one hand and my .30-caliber rifle slung over the opposite shoulder. As I say, we had just reached the crest of the rise and could look over at the little strip of Bridger Lake that reaches out like a grasping finger, ready to poke a hole through the narrow dike of land and tap the cold, clear waters of the Pool. All of a sudden, not over a hundred yards away, a sight met my eyes that nearly knocked me for a loop.

Softly I sank to a squat and motioned Jonesie with a flick of my hand from behind to pipe down. For right there, before my eyes and directly facing me, stood the biggest bull moose I had ever encountered. His flat spread of antlers looked as wide as a

church door. There was no doubt that he had seen me. But did that worry him? Nix, and again nix. After a few seconds' steady gaze in my direction, he calmly proceeded to lower his great snout into the water again, where he had been rooting around for some submarine dainties when I interrupted him at his aqueous browsing.

By this time, Jonesie had crept up to within a few feet behind me. Sinking closer to the ground, I turned slowly and whispered back.

"Do you see him?" I hissed.

"I see her," Jonesie hissed back, a twinkling, derisive grin beginning to spread over his map.

"Her, h——!" I snorted. "I say, do you see him—and I still mean him!"

Jonesie inched up closer to me, and a moment later stage-whispered to me that he'd be danged if it wasn't a "him,"—and what's more, that the old lady was there with him. And sure enough she was—the upshot of it being that Jonesie had been watching the cow and couldn't see the bull, while with me it was exactly the reverse.

"How much of a spread do you figure he has?" I asked.

"Not more'n about fifty inches—but go ahead and take him. He's the best you've seen yet, and it may be just your luck that he's the best you will see."

I confess I had to make a strong resolution right then, before I made my next move. That resolution was: I will not shoot. I knew I had to make such a resolution before I snaked my rifle out over a log and centered the top of the telescope post on the shaggy shoulder at the base of the neck. The temptation to slip the safety off and press the trigger is too strong unless a man makes his resolution beforehand not to shoot.

I admit it was a terrific temptation. That monstrous old bull looked to me to have a spread of at least sixty inches—a flat, wide flare of antlers that was gorgeous to behold. He was the fifth bull moose I had seen thus far on the trip, not mentioning thirty or forty cows, and it is true also that he was by far the best I had

seen. Also, I had paid fifty dollars in good United States cash (well anyway, in pretty good United States cash) for the privilege of taking a pot shot at one of these stately monarchs of the Yellowstone meadows. But I shall be glad for the rest of my life that I made that resolution when I did—before I lined up the telescope sight on him—and that I didn't squeeze home the trigger.

Well, we sat there watching Mr. and Mrs. Moose at their feeding for a full quarter of an hour. The old gent stood knee-deep in the drink, calmly snouting around on the bottom for his steak and potatoes, and every once in a while raising his head and giving us a calm, cold once-over. Against the dark background of forest he looked as black as charcoal. The old lady didn't venture down into the water, preferring to stand back in the edge of the timber, almost buried in the scrub undergrowth, but keeping an ever-watchful eye on her lord and master.

Presently the big fellow moved slowly out of the water and into the forest, apparently bored by the bad manners of a couple of curious-looking guys who insisted on watching him fork up his chow. I think I know what his reaction must have been, because I have speared up my spaghetti too often in one of those New York restaurants where, when you go in, the only table left is in front of a wide plate-glass window exposed to the gaze of gawking passers-by. At any rate, the big bull moved sedately into the timber and the old lady lost no time in following after.

Now this was all jake with me, because it so happened that I had shot a mallard over on the Pool a half hour before, and I had watched the duck take a long slanting drop that I figured must have landed him just about in the little finger of water that separated the bull moose and me. And sure enough, when I looked, there was my duck, lying out about fifteen feet from shore on the opposite side, not over fifty yards from where the bull had been standing. So, the two moose having departed, I left Jonesie sitting on a log and made my way around the narrow strip of water, and attended to the business of retrieving the dead mallard.

Fortunately, the trees out there in Wyoming grow straight and tall in proportion to their thickness. I seized on a long dead sap-

ling, of which a quantity lay tangled right close to the beach at the edge of the timber, and with a twist cracked it off at the butt with a loud report. Just the right length, I thought. And with that I proceeded to step out on a couple of logs and reach out with my "rake."

I was doing nicely, coaxing the mallard in gradually, when all of a sudden I heard a whoop out of Jonesie. Almost at the same instant I heard an ominous crash of brush back in the forest.

"Look out, Bob! He's coming!"

As quick as I could, I whirled around—and there I stood, with my long pole outstretched in the direction from whence the crackling brush had come, resembling nothing less ridiculous than Don Quixote, the old windmill fighter. I don't know what in Sam Hill I expected to do with my long pole. I forgot entirely that I had a short-nosed .38 Police Positive in my pocket, which incidentally would have been just about as useful under the circumstances as a feather duster. And I also forgot that Jonesie was sitting over on the opposite side with the .30 caliber, with chamber and magazine filled with sudden death.

The whole upshot of it was, simply, that while the situation was chock-full of potential drama, Jonesie was having a grand and hilarious time over my discomfort. Of course, he was all set to shoot in case His Majesty came for me in a big way. And the dang kidder had also counted on the situation throwing me so thoroughly into the jitters that I would forget all about the protective artillery that was guarding me.

Nevertheless, that old bull did come for me. I could make out his shadowy form twenty yards off there in the brush. And I can imagine his disgust when he found me there, instead of a meddlesome young bull that would have given him a fine opportunity to show his old lady what a real tough guy he was. My breaking off that dry dead sapling he had mistaken for the crashing of antlers on dead wood—which in moose language is a challenge that means fight, and nothing else.

I want to tell you I breathed easier when his dark form melted silently into the forest gloom again. I did my best to shake the

jitters out of my knees—and almost, but not quite, succeeded in treating the matter nonchalantly when I got back to Jonesie. But I wasn't fooling that worthy a bit, for he still showed signs of inward evil mirth as I came up. Whereupon I fired the mallard at him, and he all but forgot to duck.

"Now I'll show you how to call him back," quoth Jonesie. "And I won't use no horn either. Nothin' except my two bare hands."

"Going to use the sign language?" I inquired, but my heavy attempt at the light touch was ignored.

Whereupon, for fully five minutes, Jonesie indulged in a series of the most gosh-awful mooings and gruntings that ever shattered the human tympanum. These ranged from quavering tenor to abdominal bass. But apparently the best Jonesie could do was to imitate the language of a very old and homely cow moose. For our big bull never gave the slightest indication that he might possibly be subject to alienation of his affections. We never saw him again.

"Shucks, if he hadn't already met up with that old woman, I'd have brought him in pronto," said Jonesie, looking just a trifle crestfallen.

But I shall always harbor a suspicion as to whether Jonesie can actually call a bull moose anything but a dirty name. A few evenings later, however, I made the delightful discovery that Jonesie really is a caller without equal. I found I could invariably depend upon him to call, even if I had two aces showing and a third in the hole. But that was only for beans and matches, and anyway that is another story.

We took up our guns and ducks and hit the game-trail back to camp, only a bit more than half a mile distant. As we approached the little clearing where our three tents nestled beneath the firs and pines, methodically measured ax-strokes came ringing clear through the thin air. That would be Ernie, or Carl, or Perry, replenishing the woodpile, and I knew that one of them would have the little old black pony Grandma hitched single and snaking fat-wood stumps out of the forest in preparation for the huge

camp fire which we lighted each night in the center of our campground.

As we trudged into camp Jonesie called out the reserves. All hands fell to duck plucking, and an hour or so later we sat down to table before the long pan holding six beautifully browned mallards roasted side by side. And here's an item that might be worth mentioning in passing. For years I have studiously avoided, whenever possible, that most arduous of all tasks—carving a duck. Out in the Thorofare country, however, the boys solved that problem long ago by the simple expedient of serving each man a whole roast duck. Offhand, you might think a whole mallard is a lot for one man. But remember that everything is big out in that country. Which same applies not only to your appetite, but also to your receiving apparatus.

I confess I couldn't get beyond one duck. But the rest of the boys progressed from duck, topped off the main course with a few jack-snipe, and then went on to a sturdy pie-and-cake course with the greatest of ease.

That part about the jack-snipe I almost forgot to tell you. How would you like to land in the middle of a ten-acre patch that was literally swarming with jack-snipe—only to discover that the only shotgun shells within a hundred miles of you were the sole remaining ten that were half in the magazine of your gun and half in your pants pockets? That's what happened to me.

I had bought only two boxes of shells in Cody. I anticipated being occupied primarily with big game. I didn't even bring one of my shotguns on from New York, because I didn't fancy riding rough trails with a thin-tubed double gun that would most certainly get very thoroughly dented before it got back.

At the last moment before driving out of Cody, Larry, my host, told me I'd surely get some duck shooting somewhere along the line, and that he had a little old Wells-Fargo 12-gauge pump with 20-inch cylinder barrel that he'd gladly lend me to pack along. I used the best part of a box of shells before I could make myself take only those shots that were within about thirty yards. I am

here to tell the world that little sawed-off road-agent wiper-out was anything but a duck gun.

On the morning Jonesie and I drifted over to the Pool to kill ourselves a mess of ducks, a swarm of jack-snipe had flitted in the night before—and there was I, left with ten shells, and literally hundreds of squawking “jacks” to be kicked out! Talk about it raining duck soup and being caught with nothing but a fork! I did the only thing I could do: went to work, knocked down seven, and then carefully retraced my steps backward so that I wouldn’t flush any more. I couldn’t bear to go forward and see birds getting up in front of me with nothing but an empty gun in my hands. That would have been too much.

In the meantime, I had knocked down two golden-eyes on the lake, out about thirty yards from shore, and the problem presented itself as to how to retrieve them. Just as we were talking this over, trying to think of some substitute for peeling off and going into that icy-cold water, I heard the sonorous music of honkers in the distance. Clearer and nearer it came. They were coming from Bridger Lake. Then, not ten feet over the tree-tops, came a V of seven. What’s worse, they came straight over my head. And there stood I with empty gun, tumpty-umpty-um-tum-tum—goldang it! Slowly the great birds circled the Pool, so low down that they looked as big as bed sheets. Then they V-ed off majestically in the direction of the Trident. And that was that.

Whereupon we again turned our attention to the pair of dead golden-eyes which floated on the mirror-like surface of that ripple-less, windless Pool. We tried heaving rocks out beyond them. After the first hundred rocks this got somewhat arduous—and the ducks got no nearer shore. Just as we began to work them in, one of us would make a misthrow, drop a stone this side of them, and all of our good work would be undone.

“Shucks,” I said to Jonesie. “No use wasting our time at this business. After all, the sun is bright and warm and the air isn’t particularly cold. I’m going in after ’em.”

Jonesie thought this was a pretty fair idea, so long as I was the

one who was goin' in. But he warned me he couldn't swim a stroke, hence to use care. I peeled off and stepped in.

Did you ever try stepping into a tankful of liquid air? Neither did I—up to that moment. Three steps, and the water hit to my knees. By that time, I was numb from my knees down. Three more steps, and I was belly-deep, and what I said about numbness goes here too.

I am proud to say I had sufficient fortitude to take about three more steps. By this time the "liquid air" reached my armpits. The bottom was going straight down. The ducks were still at least twenty yards from me. Something left uncongealed in me quickly telegraphed down and said—dogs, get us out of here; and did I git, brothers, did I git! I am willing to take oath that the temperature of that frigid mountain pool was at least 40 degrees below zero, and I am still seeking some explanation as to how it could remain in liquid state.

As I neared the edge, coming out at express-train speed, I threw myself head-long into the drink and wallowed over and over, jumped up and scoured with handfuls of sand. Then out and stretched on the warm, dry dead grass along the shore—and boy-oh-boy, wasn't that livin'! I was the only man in the party who had an honest-to-goodness bath during the trip. But I am here to say I'd rather forswear that honor next time.

We decided to let the night winds drift the ducks into shore and come back next morning and pick them up; and from there, Jonesie and I made our way round the rim of the Pool to our encounter with the bull moose.

The evenings around the huge camp fire were rich and colorful. The black canopy of night with myriads of twinkling stars hung low. With bellies full and chores all done, we'd sit in a circle around that crackling glowing mass, the keen frosty mountain air nipping at our backs, so that every once in a while one of us (under the pretext of throwing on another log) would stand up and turn his rear to the blaze.

Conversation turns to the taking of game heads that are below par. Carl tells of a Heinie baron he guided two seasons back who

insisted on killing a little mountain ram that had barely sprouted his horns.

The old argument arises as to whether a grizzly will, or will not, eat a white horse. Pro and con, back and forth it goes.

"Old man Norquist would never kill a white horse for bait," put in Jonesie.

Silence for a moment, then the conversation turns in another direction.

One of the boys tells of the unfortunate circumstance of having been forced at one time to kill an old grizzly sow with cubs. For days after, he was haunted by the crying of those cubs. They had even followed the hide after the sow had been skinned out.

"A black bear cub can be easy tamed," drawls bass-voiced Ernie, "but a grizzly cub, never."

The others agree.

More moments of ruminative silence. Suddenly an uninvited guest pokes her nose almost into the fire-lit circle. It is Old Jennie, the cow moose, who stands all day long belly-deep in the lake, browsing away within plain view, less than two hundred yards from our camp. With a whoop, Jonesie grabs a burning brand and tears out after Jennie. There follows a grunt and a snort and great splashing as Jennie retreats to the waters of Bridger Lake.

The talk drifts to the hibernation of bears. "All of 'em curl up in the Thorofare country by November 1," says one of the boys. The rest agree. Jonesie tells me that bears will not touch meat just prior to hibernation. They go into the winter sleep on practically an empty stomach. Yet on the return trip down through Deer Creek Cañon I saw the carcass of a dead horse with practically the whole left hind quarter eaten off. The horse had fallen off the trail and was killed on a hunting trip three weeks previous to my arrival. Evidently some bear—for it was a bear that did the eating, Perry said—was either a late hibernator, or was overly fond of the flesh-pots. For this was late in October.

Jonesie has a deep-seated and abiding dislike for all grizzlies, I discover. Several years back, over in Yellowstone Park, he was clawed out of his tent and very thoroughly chawed up by a grizzly

one night—so thoroughly chewed, in fact, that he spent the best part of three months in a hospital. Can't say I blame him.

The talk shifts to rifle marksmanship. Instance after instance is related, now received in silent respect, then again greeted by rollicking guffaws. Carl relates his experience with a tenderfoot he took up into the mountains one autumn.

"That guy couldn't hit a bull in the behind with a fryin' pan," says Carl.

More laughter.

Conversation drifts to the topic of getting lost in the maze of mountain game trails. Turning to Charlie, Carl asks what would he do in case he got lost—and then without waiting for an answer (which I imagine vastly relieved Charlie) Carl proceeds to tell what to do.

"Stay right where you are," he counsels. "Your guide will be able to find you that way. Failing in that, always go down-hill—never up. Go down-hill until you strike a stream, then go downstream—always down. Before long you will strike a trail or wagon road that will lead somewhere."

The talk turns to trappers who go screwy from too much solitude. Carl tells of a fellow he trapped with one winter. The partners saw each other only every seven days. Finally, said Carl, the fellow got so batty that he began having memories—memories that, he said, wouldn't let him sleep. Carl was dog-gone glad when spring came and the partnership broke up.

"You got it all wrong," puts in Perry. "Trappers don't go screwy. They're like sheep herders—they're that way right from the beginning."

More guffaws. These lordly roughnecks are cattlemen, and frankly despise sheep and sheep herders.

Grizzlies crop up again. All hands agree that they are one dang nuisance, particularly since they persistently tear down the red-painted fire-tool boxes and "Prevent Fire" signs put up by the U.S. Forest Service.

The saga of Shorty, horse wrangler and champion snorer, is related. Shorty, it seems, was the biggest eater in the country.

Snored, talked—even cussed in his sleep. “Also ground his teeth like a pig grindin’ corn,” said Carl. Kept everybody in the bunk-house awake with his snoring on this one night in particular. Then all of a sudden he turned over on his side and quit snoring. In the dead silence that followed, someone called out, “Thank God, the so-and-so died!”

The next subject is Jonesie’s cooking. How do you know when a flapjack is done just enough on one side to turn her over? Jonesie replies that he counts the bubbles. When thirteen bubbles appear, then it’s time to slip the turner under the cake and flop her over. Gelatine, when Jonesie serves it, is known as “nervous pudding.”

Big feet is the next subject. Perry once knew a guy whose feet were so big that he had to use a crossroads for a bootjack. Some of the humor is bucolic, kiddish. But most of it is sharp, shrewd—the kind of humor young Abe Lincoln must have employed in his early political stumping.

Carl begins a gentle ribbing of Jonesie. Tells of the time when they started out on a trip and he told Jonesie that he would have to ride a bronc.

“I don’t give a dang,” said Jonesie. “I can ride any bronc on four legs, and don’t care a dang how many times he bucks.”

“You wouldn’t feel anything after the first buck nohow,” retorts Carl.

The noisy quacking of a bunch of mallards sounds from the dark distance of the lake. A coyote tunes up his eerie wail over Hawk’s Nest way. The fire has sunk to a glowing mass of embers. One by one, the boys get up, stretch their hands over the glowing coals for one last soak-up of the grateful warmth. And soon, all the camp save me is asleep. This keen, pine-scented mountain air is like wine. Even the nights are too exhilarating to waste in sleep.

After what seems to be only a lapse of two or three hours, I awaken sharply as the full-throated coyote chorus greets the pale light of dawn. A half hour later I can see through the tent-flap the snow-capped mountain spires catching the first pink tints of

the rising sun. The mallards break noisily on the surface of the mist-laden lake. Their wings go whistling over the tent. It is Sunday morning.

It is eight-thirty by the time I crawl out of my tent and dash for the water pail. Charlie and I have been sluggards. The rest of the camp is up and around, already having had breakfast. Jonesie regards me from the cook-tent door with a reproving eye, and in the sepulchral tones of a gloomy parson says: "I take my text from St. Mark. For verily I say unto you, it is easier for a camel to crawl through the eye of a needle than for a lazy dude to enter into the Kingdom of God."

I mutter through a generous coating of soapsuds and icy water that my idea of the Kingdom of God right at that moment would be a stack of flapjacks drowned in butter and a tankard of steaming tea. Whereupon Jonesie disappears like a white-haired gnome of the mountains, and I know he is busy at his rites of counting the thirteen bubbles. Another gorgeous day has begun.

I'd like to tell you the whole story of that Wyoming trip. There are at least a hundred episodes I could unravel.

How to pick a good mountain horse, for instance. According to Perry, he should have a big belly, so that he can fill up at night; be a good walker; be gentle, so that you can get on him from either side; and no stamper.

Also, what to wear on a mountain hunting trip. That's a story in itself. A sleeping bag with a good pneumatic mattress is one item. Another is three good suits of heavy underwear. You don't need pajamas. I found that, keeping the three suits of woolen underwear running in rotation, I'd take off No. 1 at night, put on No. 2 to sleep in, put on No. 3 the next day, and so on. It works swell.

And by the way, when you're casting about for really essential things to take along on a mountain hunting trip, don't forget your snow glasses—and by all means, take along a "white lipstick" to keep your lips from cracking wide open in that dry, chappy air.

If you use a telescope on your rifle, I advocate carrying it in a belt scabbard, with a handkerchief or two wadded down over the

top of the 'scope before the scabbard cover is buckled. This prevents the 'scope from being harshly jolted around in riding over the rough trails. If you rely on a micrometer rear sight, watch your step. Repeatedly shoving the rifle in the scabbard and drawing it out may so turn the micrometer adjustment that you wouldn't be able to hit a bull moose at fifty yards. Watch out for that.

Wear a ten-gallon hat regardless of whether you feel funny in it or not. When it rains, you'll be glad you've got on a big waterproof lid. Also, get yourself a cheap pair of chaps. Some of the brush you ride through will shred your doeskin panties pretty thoroughly without the protection of chaps. Above all, do not take too many preconceived notions into the mountains. Follow the customs of the country. Carry your rifle scabbarded under your leg, butt to the rear, on rough forest game trails. Even then, it won't be safe.

On the ninth day we pulled up stakes and soon left behind us the far-spreading meadows of the Yellowstone. By afternoon we had reached the Blind Basin country again, and it was apparent that the elk migration was on full blast. Herd after herd could be seen browsing above the rim-rock. On the morning of the eleventh day we pulled out on the home trail, heading up the Thorofare once more to cross the Continental Divide at Deer Creek Pass, then down Deer Creek Cañon. And as the purple shadows of evening were spreading over the Shoshone Valley we slowly led our horses down the mountainside and rode over the meadows to the ranch.

As I shook hands with Perry down at the horse corral next morning and bade him good-by, I sensed that each of us wanted to say something that wouldn't quite come out. I should like to have said, "So long, you danged old lanky leatherneck. I hope our trails will cross again sometime." But—we parted with a handshake and an awkward good-by.

I want to get back to Wyoming some day. It is a stern, forbidding, gorgeous land. And I am going back—some day.

SIMBA¹

*When he uses his power, it is to kill
for food*

By HUGH PRIOR

THE LION is a gentleman"—that is the way Carl Akeley, the great American naturalist and hunter, described him. And the more one comes in contact with the lion in his native haunts, the more one is inclined to agree with that description. As long as there is a jungle and wild beasts left to range it, the crown of beastdom will surely continue to rest on the lion's shaggy head.

The mighty elephant never loses that touch of the fabulous with which he first impressed us. We first met the rhinoceros in our picture books, and he still remains a monster of ugliness, with somehow a touch of the prehistoric beast. Remember the feeling of admiration and aversion aroused by your first look at the sinuously beautiful but slinking leopard? And I think it is safe to say that the appearance and characteristics of the buffalo would hardly cause a hunter to warm up to that ferocious and sinister beast.

But the lion? He has always been the king of the beasts. Whether we meet him on the veld, or watch him pace in caged and furious helplessness, he still remains the embodiment of animal nobility and loses not one whit of his majesty. Iron bars serve merely to emphasize the physical grandeur of him and the natural dignity which no other beast possesses. Even his voice has an awe-

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some quality. His rumbling growl will set your midriff quivering, and his full-throated roar can be heard across eight miles of veld.

I know that some writers, with inadequate knowledge and limited experience, have given the impression that the lion is a vicious killer, forever crouching in ambush, ready to pounce on anything that ventures within reach of his spring—especially man. That is a pure libel on Simba. The truth is that none other of the big game can be approached so closely, and with such safety, by man—provided man refrains from definitely aggressive action.

Even when man does attack him, the lion will turn away. He will turn away again and again, as if unwilling to fling his mighty strength against the puny-looking thing that dares to challenge him. As if mutely assuring his pursuer that, though he is equipped with the most effective weapons in the animal arsenal, battle is the last thing he desires; that when he uses his power, it is to kill for food alone—which is the literal truth.

If suddenly surprised at very close quarters, he may act on purely self-defensive instinct, and spring. Yet I can give three instances, of which I have personal knowledge, to show that even then he will usually go his way, if he can.

All three occurred in Kenya. In one case an elderly Boer farmer, after making a partial round of his extensive farm, was returning to his house. As he was about to turn a corner of the building he unslung his rifle. He turned the corner, and then stopped in his tracks. Facing him, at a distance of fifteen or twenty feet, was a lion, crouching back defensively. He had stopped at the same instant as the man. Each was equally surprised at the other's sudden appearance.

For some seconds, man and beast stood and stared at each other. Then the lion, with never a growl or a hostile gesture, turned to move away. Not in precipitate retreat, but at a deliberate walk, as if he felt that his peaceful intentions would be shared by the man. But the Boer, an expert shot, swung up his rifle and dropped him with a head shot. Had the lion chosen to spring, instead of turning away to retreat, the man would not have had the faintest chance to get in a shot.

Another instance occurred at the residence of a Kenya settler while I was his guest. It was night, and the white moon, with its dawn-like light, made the landscape wonderfully clear. The settler and I were sitting on the front veranda. Suddenly we heard a shot behind the house. We rushed around and found Juma, the Masai head boy, standing beside the wire compound with a shotgun in his hands. Beyond the wire, loping off in a none too hurried retreat, was a lion.

Juma explained that he had discovered the lion nosing along the compound. Instead of calling us, he reached for the gun, which stood on the back porch, and let fly. The distance could not have been more than fifty or sixty feet, and Juma was a fair shot. It is hardly possible that the lion was not stung by some of the pellets, yet instead of springing over the wire at the boy he cleared off. Had he attacked, the rash Masai would have been killed or mauled long before we could have got our rifles and come to his rescue.

While it is not common for lions to approach so close to dwellings, they sometimes will. A few years ago a 12-foot lion was killed in the heart of Parklands, the thickly populated residential suburb of Nairobi.

The third case took place in the bush. A young Welsh engineer, who had been only a few weeks in the country, was out on duty with a party of surveyors. During the midday rest he picked up his rifle, with which he was far from expert, and strolled out of camp in search of a buck.

The underbrush between the trees was not too dense, and after a while he spotted an animal gliding through a thin bit of bush. He hurried after it and presently caught partial sight of it again. Immediately he fired. Full of hope, he ran to the spot, but there was no dead buck. He went on, and a third time glimpsed a brown body. Again he fired, and again rushed forward, to find empty bush.

The chase led him to a ravine. He stopped on the edge, eagerly searching its bushy depths. And suddenly he saw, climbing up the opposite side, not a buck, but the big, tawny form of a lion!

The sight of that lion, the first he had seen in Africa, and the realization that he had been firing at it so scared him that he dropped his rifle and tore back to camp as if the lion were at his heels. He arrived breathless, and was unable for some time to tell his story. He had had the very narrowest of escapes, but it took him a long time to live the episode down.

The lion can be harried just so far by the hunter. There comes a point in the pursuit when his patience ends, and mounting anger takes its place. Then he will turn to face his foe, his yellow eyes ablaze, menacing growls issuing from his cavernous throat, his tail lashing from side to side.

If, in that momentary pause, the hunter does not fire, in a matter of seconds the lion will be in headlong charge. And that will be the test of the man's courage and skill. The lion is then a most difficult target, for his charge is always made in long, 12-foot bounds. When the hunter does hit, the shot must be a paralyzing one, unless, of course, he gets in a clean brain shot. I have heard professional hunters tell of cases where lions have been shot through the heart, yet completed their charge before dropping dead.

The lion's tremendous vitality is illustrated by the curious adventure of a Kenya hunter. He had been chasing a lion from one bit of cover to another for quite a while, without getting a chance for a shot. Eventually Simba decided he had had enough of the game of hide and seek. He shot out of a thicket and charged at his persistent enemy. The hunter, who was an expert shot and was using a very powerful rifle, coolly held his fire until the hurtling beast was close. Then he fired at the chest, just as the lion was rising in one of his bounds. He hit, and fully expected his victim to crumple when he touched the ground.

But the lion neither swerved nor faltered, nor did his speed slacken. The astonished hunter, instead of jumping aside, was raising his rifle for a second shot when the lion reached him. Man and beast went down together, the man dazed, but not much hurt, and fully conscious.

Then the lion did a strange thing. Instead of mauling the pros-

trate hunter, he seized him by the thigh and turned toward the near-by bush. He carried the dangling man in his jaws for a short distance, then dropped him and went on into the bush. The hunter crawled as fast as he could to where his rifle lay, picked it up and limped after the lion. There was no sound or movement in the bush, and he cautiously entered it. A few yards away he found the big beast stretched on the ground, dead.

Examination showed that the bullet, after striking squarely in the chest, had traversed the entire length of the body, tearing vitals on its way and emerging from a gaping hole in a flank. Yet the stricken beast had retained sufficient strength to complete his charge and power enough, had he so chosen, to have killed or terribly mauled the helpless man.

Lord Delamere, one of Kenya's oldest and most prominent settlers, once had a remarkable escape from death or a severe mauling by a lion. He and a companion were hunting on the Athi Plains, a noted lion district. Their beaters had driven a lion out of cover, but before either man could fire it had reached the shelter of a big patch of bush. The hunters took up positions on one side, a few hundred yards apart, sending some of the boys around to the other to drive the lion out.

The beaters raised their usual din, which a lion will seldom endure for long. The two men stood, rifles ready, their eyes on the edge of the bush. Suddenly Delamere's boy shouted a warning. Delamere swung around, just too late to avoid the spring of a lion that had slipped out of the bush a little way behind him. This was not the lion the hunters were after, but a second one that had already been in the thicket.

It looked like curtains for Delamere as he went down beneath the furious beast. The other hunter was much too far away to risk an immediate shot, and before he could reach close quarters, and shoot safely, Delamere could have been torn to ribbons. He might have been, too, but for the swift action of the boy, who was totally unarmed. Without the slightest hesitation he sprang at the lion. Landing on his shoulders, he seized two fistfuls of the lion's shaggy hair and began to tug at the massive head with might and main.

The surprised beast suspended his attack on the prostrate hunter while he tried to shake off the clinging native.

But the boy, tossed about on his terrible mount, held grimly on. And at last the lion, backing off Delamere, swung aside with such sudden fury that the native lost his grip and was flung to the ground. The lion at once pounced on him and sank his fangs in the boy's leg. Before he could do more damage the second hunter had closed in. At a distance of a few feet he dropped the lion across his victim with a head shot.

The boy's chief injury was his crushed leg. It was patched up and saved, but its owner was crippled for life. I wonder whether that native's action should be attributed to blind instinct or to superb courage. Probably to a mixture of both.

The lion's massive build suggests his strength, but gives little indication of his agility. Yet he can spring not only a great distance, but also to an astonishing height, as the following incident will show.

A Kenya settler, after watching his herdsman shepherding a flock of sheep into the stockade, which was made of stout timber, entered his house. The sun had just touched the horizon, and already the brief equatorial twilight had lowered. A minute or two later he heard a commotion somewhere outside and the excited shouting of a native.

Picking up his rifle, he hurried outside to investigate. The shouting had ceased, but something unusual was going on inside the compound, for strange sounds were issuing from it. The gate was still open, and he ran in. In the deepening twilight an amazing sight confronted him.

In a far corner, packed together in a dim gray mass, were the sheep. Midway along the wall the herdsman—a big powerful Masai—was half lying, half sitting on the ground. Above him, but crouching back from his swiftly stabbing spear, was a big black-maned lion. The boy's arm was darting backward and forward like a piston rod, his spear point striking each time and, whether it hurt or not, evidently bewildering the lion.

The settler hurried up, shouting encouragement to the boy. To

his utter astonishment, the Masai cried out not to shoot, but to leave the job of killing the lion to him. "What the boy was doing," the settler explained in telling the story, "may be described as sparring for an opening. He was trying to get set for a thrust at the heart through the chest. He might possibly have made it, but the chances were mightily against him."

Edging in close, the settler had to place his gun barrel almost against the weaving head of the lion to get in the brain shot that put an end to the fantastic struggle. The boy got up, bleeding from several ugly gashes, but otherwise unhurt. Instead of being grateful to the white bwana, he was aggrieved and angry. In his view, he had been robbed of the chance of a lifetime. Had he killed that lion single-handed, he would have been entitled to wear the mane as a head-dress, and thus have become a full-fledged warrior, the envy of his tribe. If the lion had been an ordinary one, he might not have felt his loss so keenly, but black-maned lions are not common, and it is seldom indeed that a native secures such a head-dress as the result of single combat. The boy was sulky for days afterward.

The stout wooden walls of that stockade were twelve feet high, built that height for the sole purpose of making them lion-proof. Yet that lion had over-topped so formidable a barrier. He had not entered by the open gate, as the settler had at first supposed.

The boy's story was that he was on his way to shut the gate when he heard the heavy thud of the lion's body landing after his extraordinary leap. He immediately charged through the scattering sheep with poised spear, and got in a shoulder thrust before the lion bowled him over. Unable to get up, he had kept jabbing, and was slowly working into a position for a killing thrust when the settler arrived and put an end to his brave, though crazy, ambition.

Lions may be encountered singly, in pairs, or in groups of five or six. In some instances hunters have come across as many as ten or fifteen. In every case but one that I have heard of, such groups have scattered and made off when they discovered man's presence—even when the hunters have been foolish enough to

fire at them. If a lion is lightly hit and charges, as likely as not two or three more will charge with him—just as when one runs away the others will join him in flight.

The exception referred to is, I think, the most remarkable case of courageous shooting on record. It took place in the Uasin Gishu, a rather wild and sparsely settled region in northwestern Kenya. The hero of the episode was a young Boer, named Engelbrecht, employed by a settler who owned a large tract of land. Like all veld Boers, he was an expert with the rifle.

Very early one morning Engelbrecht set out, for a load of something or other, in a wagon drawn by two or three span of oxen. A mile or so from the settler's place the ground became hilly. Rounding one of the little hills in his lumbering vehicle, the young man suddenly found himself face to face with no fewer than nine lions.

Most of them were stretched out at ease on the ground, and it was evident that they had spent the greater part of the night there, after feeding and drinking. But all were quickly on their feet as the wagon hove in view and came to an abrupt stop. Nine tawny forms stood motionless, and nine pairs of yellow eyes fixed themselves on the lone invader of their solitude with his rattling equipage.

Most men in Engelbrecht's desperate position would have waited for the lions to make the first move. The chances were, that move would have been a concerted retreat to the nearest cover as soon as the surprised beasts were satisfied that no attack was coming. But in spite of the tremendous odds against him, the young Boer did not hesitate. Standing in the heavy, springless wagon, he immediately began firing at the perfect targets offered.

All the lions were within pointblank range, and three or four went down to his unerring aim before two of them had recovered sufficiently to disregard the booming of the rifle and make a simultaneous charge. If they had charged at him, there is little doubt that Engelbrecht's career would have ended then and there. But they landed on the necks of the leading bullocks. Their action not only saved the young man, but enabled him to pick

them off with head shots as they mauled the cattle, a few feet away from the muzzle of his rifle.

The remaining lions, instead of running away, plunged about in confusion, making the air quiver with their terrific roars. One or another halted momentarily, giving the marksman the second or two necessary to score a hit.

Meanwhile, back at the farmhouse, the settler listened with surprise and alarm to the rapid and steady firing, which must have sounded to him like an engagement between infantry patrols. Grabbing his own rifle, he jumped on a pony and galloped to the scene, guided by the firing. He arrived in time to see his young hired man pumping finishing bullets into the last of the wounded lions.

Engelbrecht had no idea how long he had been firing. The settler estimated that no more than eleven minutes had elapsed between the first shot and his arrival on the scene. Nine lions in eleven minutes—at the cost of two mauled bullocks!

Some months later, in Nairobi, I talked with the young fellow about his remarkable exploit. He made the shrewd remark that it was safer to tackle nine than three or four lions, since confusion was more likely to occur among the larger number, unless they retreated en masse. I asked him about his feelings during those hectic eleven minutes. He replied that the job in hand called for such concentration that there was no room for feelings of any kind. That was why he had felt no fear or nervousness.

Two Kenya hunters had a jolting experience with lions near El Donyo Sabuk, a mountain some fifty miles from Nairobi. While returning to camp one day they were crossing a stretch of open veld which was covered with grass about two feet high. It was nearing midday, and the hunters, tired and hot, had handed their rifles to their boys, who were trailing some distance behind them.

Thinking they had the grassy plain to themselves, they were completely relaxed. The shock was all the greater when, without the slightest warning, the air was filled with terrific roars. The roars came from all around them, and were alarmingly close.

Blending together, they produced a volume of sound that was blood-chilling.

In a few seconds the scared hunters saw what appeared to be dozens of lions. Rising out of the grass and vanishing into it again, they kept bounding about in all directions, their apparently amazing numbers adding to the terror of their thundering roars. The two men, well ahead of their boys, had blundered right into the middle of the pack.

Unarmed and helpless, the two hunters stood for some time frozen in their tracks, staring at the succession of tawny bodies shooting from the grass. Then they wheeled for their rifles, expecting that the boys had closed up with them. But the roars had halted the natives, too. Forgetful of their first duty in such a case, they stood clutching the rifles and staring pop-eyed at the leaping lions. The hunters called angrily to them, and they began to move up, none too hastily.

By that time the aimless leaping was taking a definite direction—away from the men. Wisely they held their fire when they saw the lions in unmistakable retreat. It was only then, when the beasts were following a more or less straight course, that they realized why there had seemed to be such a great number. Bouncing so rapidly out of the grass, every time at a different spot, each lion seemed to be multiplied to half a dozen. The actual number, they estimated, was not more than eight or ten.

There is little doubt that those two men owed their lives to the failure of the frightened boys to hurry up with the rifles. Had they had guns in their hands, the hunters would probably have started firing, with dire results to themselves, as they were without cover or protection.

In Kenya, I saw a settler display what was either reckless courage or the peak of foolhardiness in hunting a lion. A friend named Scott, a New Zealander, and I were guests of the settler, San Clarke, an Irishman—his nationality perhaps accounting for the daredevil thing he did. He was a keen lion hunter. Up to that time he had put away some fifteen lions, and the long list of other

game that he had bagged would have done credit to any professional big-game hunter. There were two bleached rhinoceros skulls on his front veranda which were used as seats.

A couple of miles from Clarke's house a shallow, winding donga led to a great, spreading swamp. As is usual with such ravines, the donga's edge was fringed with a chain of thickets, so close together as to form an almost continuous line of bush.

Early one morning Clarke's boys reported that there was a lion in that bush. The three of us hurried out and followed the boys to the particular patch of cover where they said the lion was lurking. It was not far from the swamp. The boys began yelling and flinging stones and branches into the bush, while we took up positions covering both sides of the thicket.

Before long the lion appeared and disappeared into the next thicket—so quickly that none of us had a chance for a shot. No one has ever seen a beater-driven lion amble out of cover. He shoots out, knowing well that something will happen to him if he loiters. This one emerged on the side of the thicket that faced the swamp. The boys surged up to the lion's fresh cover and continued their hideous din. Again a tawny streak flashed between two thickets, and again the boys, like a pack of barking dogs, made the leaves of the lion's shelter quiver with their yells and missiles.

That sort of thing went on from bush to bush and, though we watched every thin spot along the donga's edge, the wily beast reached the edge of the swamp without any of us getting in a shot. Then, as he loped across the few feet of open space between bush and swamp, Clarke did get in a quick snap-shot. We heard the slapping sound of the striking bullet, but the lion went on and burrowed into the reedy cover that he had been making for.

It was then that Clarke put on his act, which seemed to us nothing less than suicidal. He handed his rifle to his head boy and took in exchange a double-barrel shotgun, which until then neither Scott nor I had noticed the boy was carrying, and told us he was going in after the lion. In the forceful language of men of the veld we told him what we thought of the mad thing he was attempting, and when he waved our objections aside we offered

to go into the swamp with him. He merely grinned in reply and told us to stay where we were and keep a sharp lookout in case the lion tried to sneak back into the bush.

With mixed feelings of anger and admiration we watched him enter the waist-high reeds and, gun to shoulder, weave about in what we assumed was the path the wounded lion had taken. He advanced very slowly, and we could see by the continuous jerkings of his helmet that he was keeping a sharp enough lookout on all sides.

Our suspense grew with each minute that so slowly passed. Finally, when nearly a quarter of an hour had elapsed, Scott and I decided that, orders or no orders, we were going to follow the madman into the swamps. While we were still hesitating we saw him halt. He went forward a few steps and halted again. The slight tilt of his helmet and the glint of light from the polished barrel indicated he was about to fire. But he didn't, and his hesitation told us what was happening in the green twilight of those reeds. The lion was moving, getting set for a spring, and Clarke's barrel was matching every move and sinuous twist. Something like ten seconds passed, and the gun roared out. Clarke stood still, and his gun remained leveled.

For what seemed minutes we waited for the second barrel. But instead of firing Clarke lowered his weapon, turned and beckoned to us on the height above him. Almost gasping with relief, and now burning with curiosity, we ran down and plunged through the stiff, rustling reeds to his side. The boys, all jabbering excitedly, followed us.

Scarcely twelve feet from where he stood the lion lay on his side, dead, with a gaping hole in his chest. It was the first time either Scott or I had seen the destroying power of a charge of shot fired at close range. Compared with the almost invisible perforation of a bullet, the devastation wrought by that shower of shot looked almost like the work of a small shell.

The grinning victor of the encounter then explained to us that it was the second time he had killed a wounded lion in that same swamp with a shotgun. Within limits, the procedure may be

effective, but I would not care to try it myself, nor would I recommend it to any would-be big-game hunter.

It has been said that by day the lion is just a big, sleepy cat, but that by night he is the alert king of the jungle. There is a certain amount of truth in the first part of the statement, in spite of its rather contemptuous tone. The second part is wholly true.

By day the lion is digesting his nightly or early-morning prey, and that process is not conducive to activity. But rouse him—root him out of the grassy dell or the dense thicket that he has chosen for his lair during the long, hot hours—and see whether he is just a big, sleepy cat! In the cemetery at Nairobi are rows of tombstones bearing the words: "Killed by a Lion." The men who sleep below those headstones prodded the drowsy Simba into a wakefulness that ended their hunting days.

The fact that the lion is the unquestioned king of the jungle is never more obvious than at night. In central Africa the night is vibrant with sounds. Some are clearly traceable to beasts. They may be vocal, or they may be the results of the swift rush of startled movements. Other sounds are strangely indefinable, combinations of noises made by beasts, birds and insects. To the lone listener the whole mingled chorus—curiously half silence, half noise—is uncanny, filling his mind with a sense of an alien, hostile world, invisible and sinister, at once fascinating and repelling.

You may listen for a long time to that murmuring jungle voice, noting a rise or a fall in it. At intervals it is broken by the distant death-cry of some stricken beast, perhaps the prey of a stealthy, lightning-swift leopard or of a lion equally stealthy, but more mercifully deadly in killing power. Then suddenly you stiffen as the full-throated roar of a lion rolls across the dim, starlit night, reverberating like echoing thunder. And at once every sound is magically stilled—every sound made by beast and bird and, stranger still, even by insects. It is as if all nature, including yourself, is awed by that mighty voice and shrinks into the silence of fear. That tribute, coming simultaneously from beast and bird and insect, is perhaps the final proof that Simba is not only the king of beasts, but also of the whole jungle world.

The average lion weighs around 600 pounds. When he steps on a dead twig, or even a stout branch that has lain long enough on the ground to lose its greenness, it will crack. And that crack will be a bugle call of warning to every beast lurking, resting or feeding within hundreds of yards of the hungry lion. As if imbued with some sort of centrifugal force, they will then shoot away in all directions.

Lions on the prowl for food will often make that misstep. This is why you will hear the sudden scurry of lesser game in the night, for no reason apparent to your duller senses. I do not think the lion is careless when he is stalking a prospective victim—only when he is spying out the land and is, perhaps, unaware of the proximity of other animals.

Yet the lion can move in the blackest night as silently as a moon-made shadow. I have had first-hand experience with that almost uncanny power of his. With every nerve as tense as a piano wire, I have lain in the intense blackness of a boma, or thorn shelter, while a lion nosed around our flimsy wall of bush. So silently did he move that only when we heard his long-drawn sniff, a foot or so from our heads, did we know he was there. Of course, he knew we were there, but, like the gentleman Akeley called him, he gave us the benefit of the doubt as to our intentions.

When he moved away, it was in the same profound silence. How did he, in that intense blackness, know where to plant his heavy paw so as to avoid the inevitable dead twig or branch? That is a mystery yet unfolded. It is one of the mysteries of wildlife in Africa that so fascinated Carl Akeley. Even to him it was a dark riddle.

IN THE JAWS OF A TIGER¹

The First Prize Story in the Narrowest Escape from Death Story Contest

By JESSE FOWLER SMITH

ALL MY VARIED EXPERIENCES of the last thirty years have not obliterated the record of one experience in the jungles of Burma. Today I can turn back memory's pages and see again that tropical landscape of meadow, field and forest, where, by all the laws of logic, my grave should be found. The faces of my companions of that day readily come back to me, and I hear again the very tones of Mr. Geis' voice as his pent-up feelings found expression in words.

The end of March, 1902, which was the beginning of my "hot-season" vacation, found me, with my wife and baby daughter, the guest of Rev. George J. Geis and his family in the Mission bungalow at Myitkyina, Burma, northern terminus of the Burma Railway. We had been there about a week when failure of the meat supply in the village market induced my host to plan a hunting trip in the hope of replenishing the larder with venison. Officers from the British regiment posted at Myitkyina had reported deer plentiful at a place about twelve miles down the railway, where, not long before, the soldiers had camped for a week for field maneuvers. We decided to bring back our venison from that region.

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Our party also included three members of the border tribe known as Kachins: namely, Ning Krawng, a teacher in the Mission School; one of his pupils, who was to be our cook; and an older Kachin, an escaped slave from a neighboring valley who bore, as a mark of his servitude, a scar where his left ear had been lopped off by his master. The ex-slave carried a *dah*, a sort of glorified butcher knife, the only tool and weapon of the Kachins. Ning Krawng and I were armed with double-barreled shotguns loaded for deer; Mr. Geis had a rifle.

From the station-master permission had been obtained to occupy as our camp the railway bungalow which, with water tank and the huts of the "pumpers," made up all there was of the railway station nearest to Myitkyina. Except when a railway official or his guests occupied the bungalow, four native "pumpers" were the sole inhabitants of this station.

With provisions for twenty-four hours we set out by the one daily train from Myitkyina. At nine o'clock, about an hour after our departure, we detrained at the station. It was several weeks before I saw another train on this railway. When the return train passed about four o'clock that day, I was five miles back in the jungle, Ning Krawng my sole companion.

Having left the cook in charge of our folding cots, bedding and food, we took our weapons and left the bungalow to look over the ground where, later in the day, we hoped to discover herds of grazing deer. Our course led down a sharp slope to an extensive meadow. A quarter of a mile by a narrow, winding path through elephant-grass that reached five feet above our heads brought us to a wooded ravine.

As we crossed this meadow, Mr. Geis said: "Here we must be on the lookout for sleeping tigers. They like to crawl into this tall grass during the day."

However, we roused no sleeping tigers. We descended the ravine, at the bottom of which trickled a dry-season stream, climbed the opposite bank and emerged from the fringe of trees, which bordered the ravine, into a large grassy plain, much like an American prairie. Through the trees above us leaped a small troop of

chattering monkeys. In other trees flocks of noisy parrots were feeding on several varieties of wild fruit.

No other signs of animal life were discernible, for before us, instead of a field of lush grass that would furnish forage to scores of deer, we looked out over several hundred acres of desolation, beyond which, some two miles away, was the edge of a deep forest. A devastating fire, traceable to the soldiers, whose former camp ground we had reached, had destroyed every vestige of food for bird as well as beast.

Disappointed, we returned to the bungalow to eat our rice and curry, enjoy a siesta, and plan a campaign for deer "in the cool of the day."

Between three and four o'clock we started once more over the same route to the hunting ground. Upon reaching the ravine, we laid our plans for obtaining a good bag despite the fire-blackened feeding grounds. We decided to look for deer in the fringe of trees that marked the courses of the ravines which seemed to encircle the open plateau.

We separated into two parties. Mr. Geis and the Kachin freedman followed the border to the right, while Ning Krawng and I took the border on the left. It was agreed that both parties should continue until we met on the far side of the open area. It was also agreed that, in case of trouble, three shots fired at distinct and regular intervals would be a call for help. So we parted.

Long-legged, barefooted Ning Krawng stalked ahead at such a pace that I could hardly do more than trail him. In a short time he disappeared from view altogether among the brush and trees. With the conviction that my safety depended upon keeping him in sight, I began to run, but before I gained sight of him his gun rang out, followed almost instantaneously by the loud crashing of some animal through the brush. My first thought was that he had shot an elephant, for it seemed to me that nothing smaller could make so much noise tearing through the undergrowth.

On reaching Ning Krawng, I found him a new man. The lust of the killer was in his blazing eyes as he told me by means of a few Burmese words and much use of pantomime that he had shot

a tiger—"a big one, wounded in the shoulder." Excitedly he showed me the pool of blood at his feet; breathlessly he pointed to the trail of blood leading off into the underbrush. Assured that I understood his words and signs, he waited not a second, but strode off along the crimson trail. With only a moment's hesitation, but with a question in my mind as to the wisdom of this procedure, I followed him, for I reasoned that, dangerous as this course might be, it was better than being left alone in a tiger-infested wilderness.

On the green carpet beneath the trees the bright red line of blood was easy to follow. For some distance ahead the undergrowth was not dense and the trees were small and scattered. No tiger was in sight. We would be alert and quick on the trigger at the first intimation of his being in range. Moreover, both of us were impressed by the amount of blood that the tiger had spilled along the way. Ning Krawng, with many ejaculations, repeatedly pointed to the crimson pools which showed so plainly the effectiveness of his aim. And with each ejaculation he bounded ahead on the trail. At intervals I paused to listen. In my ignorance I expected to hear the death groans of the animal that was losing his life-blood in such quantities.

After a few minutes we came to a steep but narrow gully athwart the trail. To the bottom of this the tiger had plunged headlong, then clambered up the opposite slope, leaving at the bottom a bucketful of gore. We, too, leaped into the gully and climbed breathlessly to the other side, expecting to find our quarry so weakened from loss of blood that one more well-aimed shot would make him ours. At the top of the gully, the trail of blood led into a tangle of bushes and bamboos that was too thick for our eyes to penetrate.

We looked at each other. We shook our heads. Ning Krawng turned to the right and took a few steps toward the open field. I turned to follow, but before I had taken two steps there came an angry roar from the bamboo thicket. I looked to see, not thirty feet away, the black and tawny stripes of an enormous tiger some ten feet in the air, headed straight for me. One thought flashed

through my mind: "If you're going to use your gun, now is the time."

I raised my gun to take aim. As the stock pressed my shoulder I drew back my right foot to brace myself for the shot. My heel caught a trailing root, and I was thrown flat on my back so suddenly that, when the infuriated tiger landed, his right forepaw came down on my left breast, his huge body covered me completely, and his fiery eyes looked into mine for one split second.

Instinctively I turned my face away. My cork helmet fell over my features; the left side of my head alone was exposed to the tiger's fangs. With a snarling bite his jaws closed on my skull. I heard his teeth crunch through my scalp, but I felt nothing. A silent prayer went up from my heart for my wife and child, to whom I had said good-by that morning. I breathed one plea for forgiveness for my folly, as I was sure that this was the end of my earthly career.

But the monster's jaws were not fatal. He had taken his bite, and I was still alive and conscious. I said to myself, "He didn't open his mouth wide enough. He'll do a better job next time." A second time he clamped his jaws upon my head; a second time I heard the crunch but felt no pain; a second time I realized that a tiger's bite had not ended my life.

My uninjured brain worked fast. "Once more," I thought. "A third time, he'll try it and complete the job." A third time, indeed, he crunched into my scalp, causing no pain.

Then, hardly realizing what had happened, I opened my eyes, raised myself on my elbow, and saw the brute's tail disappearing into the same thicket from which, but a few seconds before, I had seen him spring. I sat up and turned my face toward Ning Krawng, who was standing like one in a trance only a few paces away.

Forgetting his ignorance of the English language, I blurted out, "Well, I'm alive, but he's got my ear." I thought that his last bite had taken my ear clean off.

As soon as he saw me get up and heard me speak, Ning Krawng cried out in Burmese, "Run! Run!" and he proceeded to climb

the nearest tree. In my confusion I could see no other tree; so I tried to climb after him. My exertions caused my wounds to bleed; the smell of the blood, now trickling down my face, nauseated me. Furthermore, when I attempted to pull myself up to the branch on which Ning Krawng sat, I found that my left arm was useless. Unable either to climb the tree or to get Ning Krawng to pull me to safety, with blanched face and a feeling of faintness I began to slide down the tree, murmuring: "It's no use. I can't make it."

Then Ning Krawng became alarmed for me. He descended, fired in quick succession both barrels of his gun, and with two more hurried shots emptied mine. Thus he had put us in the delightful predicament of being alone in the tiger jungle with two empty guns. Not waiting to reload, he urged me to get upon his back, but I refused. So we started on the run, out of the woods, and into the center of the open plain.

After we had covered about a half mile, Ning Krawng carrying both guns, we reached the actual camp site of the soldiers. There we threw ourselves upon the ground and panted until I had recovered my wind. Crying out for water, I followed Ning Krawng back toward the bungalow. At the point where our morning path had crossed the ravine he made a cup from a big leaf and gave me a drink of water from the stream. It was the most refreshing drink that ever wet my lips.

Back at the bungalow, I fell exhausted on my cot, where Ning Krawng left me to go for our companions. Mr. Geis had heard the quick succession of our shots, had concluded that we were finding plenty of game, and therefore made no effort to come to our help.

The sun had set when Mr. Geis arrived. He washed my wounds, dressed me in pajamas, made a stretcher out of my cot and two bamboo poles, and ordered the four pumpers to carry me on their shoulders up the twelve miles of railway track to the nearest doctor. The swaying motion which the bearers gave to my stretcher soon lulled me to sleep, and for the most of the way I slept peacefully.

Within a few minutes of our arrival at the Mission House, the regimental surgeon from the military hospital appeared. His examination showed several scalp wounds, one deep incision near the crown, my left ear hanging in three strips, and a deep wound in the left shoulder just below the collar-bone. This last was made by my fall upon a stiletto-like stump. The pressure of the tiger's right forepaw had pushed me firmly down upon this "spit," and had also left five black-and-blue footprints upon my left breast. This wound in the shoulder, fortunately, injured neither my collar-bone nor my shoulder-blade, but the laceration of the muscles had caused my arm to be temporarily useless.

Having examined all my injuries, the doctor gave me ammoniated spirits to inhale (since he had no anesthetic), and proceeded to cleanse and dress my wounds. He took thirteen stitches in my head and ear. At this point for the first time I began to feel pain, and I felt it a-plenty.

I spent the next twelve hours in my own bed. For the next five or six days the doctor visited me daily. After that I was able to ride a bicycle to the hospital for the daily dressing. Thanks to my own clean blood and the doctor's skillful ministrations, no infection developed. This was a matter of relief to my friends and of surprise to the doctor, who declared that, in all his experience as an army surgeon in the tropics, he had never known a person to survive a tiger's mauling. In those rare cases where the victim had not been killed outright, blood-poisoning had set in, and death soon resulted.

At the end of the vacation period my wounds had all healed. I returned to my work at Rangoon according to the plan made six weeks before. At that time, few scars were discernible. Today a "dent" in my head, apparent only to the touch, a scar on my shoulder and two "seams" on my left ear are the only outward evidence of my first and only attempt to win fame as a big-game hunter.

This fearful experience is called to my mind every time I enter a barber shop, for barbers always want to know what made the "hole" in my head. I tell them but they never believe me.

QUAIL OF THE EASTERN SHO¹

*Hunting bob-white in a country where
folks take time to live*

By A. R. BEVERLEY-GIDDINGS

FOR THE LAST DECADE I have kept a journal of my sporting days afield. Appropriately checked in red crayon are my red-letter days. They have titles such as these: The Day of the Cherry-Red Buck; The Day of the Ten Thousand Woodcock, when a norther breathed idly over Louisiana and it seemed that every clump of underbrush harbored a bird; The Day of the Brown Pelican, which tells of swarming canvas-backs rather than a pelican; The Lazy Day, a tale of snipe. And lastly, I find this unromantic title: The Day of the Puncture, which fortunately refers to a tire and not to anyone's person.

I was somewhat astonished to notice lately, while checking through this well-worn field journal, that with very few exceptions these red-letter days were the result of accident. I don't mean the luck which so largely governs the gunnerman's success or non-success, but rather that rarely was one of these bright days planned in detail. They came about, almost without exception, through sheer accident.

Certainly, this was the case with the Day of the Puncture. We had taken a house on the Eastern Shore of Maryland for the summer and autumn. When the open season arrived, I soon ex-

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hausted the shooting in my neighborhood, though I may have been a little over-generous in the amount of seed stock I left behind, as one of my neighbors rather derisively informed me. But better to err on this side than on the other, even if one's game record remain anything but flattering.

Our part of the Sho' was a trifle too near certain large cities to be really prolific in game. A jaunt farther afield was indicated. I had heard that there was very good quail shooting in some of the lower counties; so I decided to venture forth more or less aimlessly and see what I could find.

I set out early one brisk November morning in a small car with my young Irish setter and an overnight bag which might or might not prove useful. If I found good shooting and the opportunity offered, I would stay over night and shoot the next day; if not, I would drive back the same night. By nine o'clock I was about sixty miles due south—and running short of gasoline.

I pulled up at a cross-roads store. While the proprietor attended to my wants I engaged one of the loiterers in conversation. I learned that there were "right smart quail" in that vicinity and received certain vague instructions as to their haunts. But the proprietor himself proved more explicit. About three miles down I would come upon a dirt cross-road. I was to turn right, go on another three miles and inquire for one Garvin.

There was no cross-road three miles down. But I had passed one a mile back, and a little reconnaissance showed there was another a mile farther on. I flipped a coin to determine which one I should take. The farther road won. So I turned to the right and proceeded leisurely through a flat, well-wooded region, interspersed with farms, swamps and patches of marsh, that looked birdy—looked a great deal, in fact, like some of South Carolina's finest quail country.

Dutifully I stopped when I had proceeded along this road for three miles and gazed around for some signs of Mr. Garvin. There wasn't a house in sight. I went on. In a few minutes I came upon a very small hamlet. There I was embarrassed by a wealth of Garvins. Half the village owned to the name, and I never did

discover just which Garvin I had been originally directed to. They offered me almost every sort of shooting save the variety I wanted, and I did not escape these hospitable folk until I had promised that I would return some other time and have a duck shoot with them.

One suggested that I take a certain narrow road out of the village which ran due south for a few miles and then turned to parallel a river. All the rivers along the Sho' are tidal and may be anywhere from a few hundred feet to several miles in width. There were some fine large farms along this particular river, I learned, which held plenty of quail, and the farmers were a kindly, generous lot. One in particular my informant recommended—Joe Sprague, who was a great gunner and had some fine dogs. The rest of the Garvins concurred in this opinion. I thanked them and drove on.

Soon I came upon the river road and turned right, as I had been directed. Through the bare trees I began to catch glimpses of pleasant farmhouses, and now and again the sunlight flashed back to me from water that must have been the river. There is a certain charm to the Eastern Shore that I have never encountered elsewhere: the charm of gentle water stealing in and out between forested banks, or laving the foot of a wheatfield, or shimmering against a verdant lawn. There is that heart-tugging charm of abundance, of peace, of a people who live happily and well.

And now for a space the thick forest closed in upon the road. I saw squirrels in the trees and a cottontail on the bank of a ditch. Once a covey of quail crossed the road before me. I was sorely tempted to follow them into the fenced land, but restrained my impulse, though I saw no trespass signs.

Quite suddenly I came out on a cornfield, and it must have been right at the point where the woods ended and the field began that I picked up the staple. I noticed, before I became aware of the puncture, that the fence had recently been repaired here. Part of a bale of wire lay along the side of the road; a rotted post had been replaced with a stout new one of locust. I went on perhaps two hundred yards before I noticed the bumping of my front

wheel. I stopped, got out and gave vent to the usual strong expressions of disgust which an occasion of this kind brings forth.

"Puncture, eh?"

I looked around. A little bird-like man with a soiled white nautical cap stuck jauntily on his head was leaning on a gate and surveying me with interest.

"Yes," I replied disgustedly, "a staple. Both prongs are in to the hilt."

"A staple," the little man repeated. He sighed, opened the broad gate, came out, looked at the tire. "Daw-gone!" he went on in a minute. "Thet's too bad. My fault. I must have dropped that danged staple in the road while I was fixin' the fence up above. Drive yore car in through the gate, an' I'll have William fix 'er. Hope you ain't in a hurry."

"Your name isn't Joe Sprague by any chance?" I asked him.

"Nope. Sprague lives five miles further down. My name's Harris. Better pull thet staple out fust before you drive the car in. Ain't no sense in makin' more holes. Got a pair of pliers?"

We removed the staple from the tire, and I drove through the gateway.

"You was lookin' for Joe?" he asked when I again got out of the car.

I explained my reason for seeking Joe Sprague.

"Shucks!" the little old man said. "If thet's all you want, I got plenty of it right here. Yes, sir! More quail on this place than Joe ever had on his. Come on up to the house."

We walked along an avenue of maple and linden to a fine old house that looked out across a broad, placid river. Well out from the shore were two duck blinds set up on piles and looking like brush heaps; closer in, a stake marked a private oyster bed. To the right of the house was a small orchard of pear, peach and apple trees, the fruit long gathered. A wheatfield, showing traces of green through the sere stubble, rolled away to the right. On the other hand was the cornfield I had just passed, its large neat shocks still standing. A score of tame white geese were disporting themselves on the river's shore; I heard the gabble of ducks, tame

also, from a reed-fringed inlet that cut into the wheatfield. There were cows and chickens in the barnyard; a flock of sheep was busy with the grass along the margin of the driveway.

Such opulence in these lean days was heartening. I said something to this effect.

"Yes, sir," the little man replied; "it's right comfortable here. All the fish, oysters an' crabs we want without no more work or cost than goin' out an' gettin' 'em. Lots of game in season: ducks, geese, snipe, woodcock an' birds." Bob-whites are generally given the proud title of "birds" below the Mason and Dixon line. "I have my own fruit, berries, corn, wheat, vegetables, poultry, mutton, lamb, pork, ham, bacon an' milk. Don't see much hard cash, but then I don't need much of thet."

"Inherited this place from my sister," he went on a minute or two later. "She married right well, bein' a mighty purty gal. Her husband was a jedge. Didn't get on with him perticler well myself. I didn't have style enough for him." He stopped to laugh softly. "I wasn't so welcome round here once, though sister didn't fall in with his high notions. And now I own the place. Daw-gone it, he wouldn't like thet!" He went off into another peal of gurgling laughter.

"Come inside," he added, when his mirth had subsided. "I'll send William down for your stuff."

"But I couldn't impose on you like this!" I protested. He cut me short with a brisk: "Shucks! I been achin' to do some bird huntin', an' I hate to go alone. Besides," he grinned, "I owe you somethin' for thet puncture. Come on in."

I followed him inside. Black William, loitering in the kitchen, where his cheery, buxom, brown-skinned wife presided, was sent to change the tire and fetch the dog and duffel. The little man then led me to a small room most attractively paneled in pine. There was a small fire burning on the hearth, for the morning was nippy. A Chesapeake dog got up from a rug in front of the fire, stretched leisurely and walked toward us with a friendly wag of his tail. We sank into great leather armchairs which were well worn from much friendly sitting.

I noticed a gun rack hanging on the wall just above my head.

"The jedge's guns," the little man informed me. "Good weapons, them. Take 'em down if you want."

There were four of them—hammerless, double-barrel ejectors. The topmost one was a heavy 10-bore; the second, a fine 12-bore made by one of the best American gunmakers; the third, an exceedingly light and handy 16 by an English gunmaker; the fourth, another 16 with longer barrels.

"Ol' Betsy Ann," the little man said as I lifted the big 10-bore down. "A shootin' fool. I used her this mawnin' on black duck. She's a mite heavy for me, though; ain't so young as I was. I ginerally use the 12-bore below her."

"What do you use on quail?" I asked.

From a corner he brought me a gun—a 20-bore pump with a 25-inch barrel, a length which would indicate that an amputation had been performed on it at some time or other. It was a deadly brush gun, a type favored by many guides I knew and had shot with. And rarely had I seen this kind of gun in the hands of an indifferent shot. My own double had bowed to its efficiency on more than one occasion. I glanced up quickly to find the little man's eyes upon me, and noticed for the first time how keen and brightly blue they were. At least, I told myself, I would not start out under-estimating his shooting prowess, nor be inveigled into counting shot against shot.

But he had a good word for my own light double. "Handsome," he said, as he took it from my hands a quarter of an hour later. "Balance jest right—jest where she should be. Short barrels, too; no need for long ones on birds. Mighty purty gun."

When I glanced at my watch, I found, to my astonishment, that the time was eleven-fifteen.

"Achin' to get out, ain't you?" the little man flung at me amiably. "Know jest how you feel. But they ain't no use goin' now before two or two-thutty. Set back an' make yourself comfortable."

It was after two when we left the house, accompanied by the little man's staid and dignified English setter and my own rollicking young red setter.

"Ain't never seen one of them dawgs thet was any good," the little man said, casting a dark eye at the Irishman. "Purty dawg to look at; purty dawg to have around; good pet dawg. But when it comes to findin' birds, them dawgs ain't natcherly there."

I explained that one of the best dogs I had ever shot behind was an imported Irish setter; that for years now I had used English setters and pointers and had found them quite satisfactory, but that nevertheless I was casting around in an endeavor to pick up a really good red dog again. This young dog was from famous parents; I expected something from him. Maybe not this year, but certainly the following one.

The little man heard me through patiently and then remarked: "I ain't much on pedigreed dawgs. The jedge had a pair the last year he was alive—blue Beltons, they was. Mighty good-lookin' pair, too. But they wasn't much on birds. I figgered that them dawgs was used to open-land gunnin'. They was just no 'count at all in the bush an' marsh. No, sir; I ain't what you might call perticler about pedigrees. If a dawg can't find birds for me, I don't want him—even if he has a pedigree as long as a duke's."

This being an unprofitable argument, I abandoned it, knowing well that my young dog would disgrace himself a dozen times before the afternoon was over.

In a few minutes we reached a small peafield. A hundred yards in front of us was a stretch of woodland curving away to the west. The little man waved a hand at it.

"Want to explain the lay of the land to you now," he said, halting. "That there belt of trees is only a few hundred feet wide. It's shaped like a horseshoe, and it runs all the way around a hundred-acre marsh. A narrow crick runs through the middle of the marsh an' jines the river over there to the south. On the outside of the horseshoe there's fields, all the way round, some cultivated, some grown to weeds, some pasture. The birds feed in the fields an' in some of the clearings in the woods. When they flush, they go, sure as shootin', to the thick woods or the marsh. The marsh ain't very wet save near the crick, an' the birds ginerally don't go thet far out. There's a full dozen coveys around the

entire horseshoe, an' I ain't shot into any of 'em this year yet. I'm goin' to turn the dawg loose. There's a good covey right in this corner of the field ginerally. . . . Hey, you, Dick! Hunt birds!"

I released the red dog. He wasted a few minutes in exuberant leaping and barking, then started out full tilt through the woods, ignoring my shouts. Dick meanwhile had come upon a hot scent. Carefully, surely, the wise old dog unraveled the trail and finally came to a stanch stand in a little point of high grass along one edge of the peafield.

The little man shook his head. "Too durn close to the woods," he said. "Why, they ain't got ten feet to go. Wouldn't be surprised if they ain't roaded into the woods already. Daw-gone, there is nothing to do but flush 'em an' see."

The birds got up as the little man had predicted—right among the trees. I had a dim view of fleeting brown forms hurtling down dusky vistas of woods, and though I shot I had no hope of bagging my bird. Nor did I. But the little man was shouting: "Dead bird, Dick. Dead bird! Fetch!" He had not missed.

"That covey went to the marsh," he said with satisfaction as he took the plump cock bird from Dick. "Thet'll be more open shootin' which will help you get yore hand in. Might as well cut straight through here."

We came out, a few minutes later, on the edge of the marsh. As the little man had said, it was roughly horseshoe-shaped, though I had never seen a horseshoe quite so elongated, and entirely surrounded by a forested ridge which attained a maximum height of perhaps fifteen feet above the marsh. From my elevated position I could see the sluggish creek winding between its reed-grown banks. It widened into a small lagoon near the river, and wild ducks were bobbing on its surface there.

The red dog came bounding like a buck through the brush. I sent him on to hunt singles along the edge of the woods. To me it seemed far more likely that the birds were on this fringe rather than in the marsh. He seemed to show some interest, and I was congratulating myself on my keenness when the little man shouted

and I saw Dick on point a full hundred feet out from the bank. The little man grinned at the look of astonishment on my face.

"They is sea-goin', these birds," he said as I drew near, and his grin widened. "I figger thet in another gineration or two they'll have web feet. Take the shot, Cap'n."

I moved forward. The bird flushed, headed straight for the woods. It was an easy shot, and down he came. At the report another bird flushed a few paces to the right. He, too, proved an easy target. The little man nodded his approval of the right and left.

"Yore dawg has somethin' on the bank," he said suddenly. "Woodcock, mebbe. Better see."

I hurried to the fringe of the woods and came up behind my setter. He turned an uneasy glance on me that said woodcock plain as day. I flushed the bird, and it started boldly and foolishly across the marsh for the opposite bank. The little man was right in my line of fire. I dared not shoot. But he was watching. He took the 'cock as it passed him a few yards to his left and flung me a grinning "Thanks!"

He walked toward me. "Ther's eight or nine birds still in the marsh," he informed me. "We'll take one or two more an' then go on to the next covey. Hey, you Dick! Hunt birds!"

But Dick had no need of this admonition. He was diligently nosing among the marsh hummocks, pausing now and again to lift his head and try the wind. The red dog had come out from the bank and was working between Dick and the woods. It was a new experience for him, this hunting quail in a marsh. He registered deep disgust and open unbelief. It was to be expected that he would blunder on a single and send it up while we were still out of range. But his astonishment was so pronounced, so ludicrous, that I let him off with a very light scolding. He settled down then. Evidently there were quail in this marsh, he decided, and this being so he had better watch his step.

Dick had another bird. The little man generously beckoned to me, but I refused. He took the shot and got his bird. Dick started to retrieve the quail, went forward a few yards, and froze again.

"Another one," the little man called. "Come and take it."

I walked up to the dog. The bird did not flush. I went ahead an additional two steps. Still no sign of the bird. I took another cautious step forward and kicked at a reedy tussock. The bird flushed behind me, I swung around quickly, lost my balance, stumbled. The little man shot and missed.

"Out-thought us," I remarked. "He deserved to get away."

But a little farther on I got a bird that flushed in front of me. Then we decided to go on to a new covey.

We went back through the belt of woods to the pasture that lay beyond. Behind us the peafield, in front a cornfield separated from the pasture by a rail fence heavily overgrown with briers, bushes and weeds. Near this fence a big hawk was flying low. His behavior was peculiar; he seemed to be patrolling a stretch not more than fifty feet long. Every now and then he would dart savagely toward the ground in the immediate vicinity of the fence and then, without quite touching the ground, sweep upward again. The little man swore roundly.

"He has a covey pinned in them briers," he said. "Let's see if we can get close enough for a shot at him. You circle across an' come down the fence; I'll go in the woods an' come up toward you. Have you any large shot?"

I had—two shells containing No. 4's. I broke the gun, slipped in the 4's and made a wide circle toward the fence. When I reached the tangled growth which marked it, I found a paralleling ditch. It was heavily overgrown with briers and offered good cover for a stalk.

Carefully I worked my way along, keeping my head down, crouching, stopping frequently. In a minute or two I heard a shot and then the beat of heavy wings directly over me as the hawk flared wildly. He was well within range. At my shot he came down end over end. The little man yelled jubilantly.

I crashed through the briers to retrieve my kill and flushed the covey. The birds whirled away toward the woods. I saw the little man turn and follow their flight with his eyes. In front of me the hawk lay on his back. As I reached him his curved talons relaxed,

his legs slowly straightened out. He was dead. I paused a moment to admire this graceless, wicked rascal, dignified even in death, but the little man came up and with a hearty cuss word kicked him into the briers.

"Thet covey didn't go far into the woods," he told me. "They're just inside the edge an' pretty well bunched. Let's get 'em."

It was from this covey that I took the largest quail I have ever seen in my life, or expect to see.

The birds were, as the little man had said, just within the edge of the woods. Dick soon came upon them and flashed into a point. I was very near him at the time; the little man was not far behind. Together we moved forward to take the flush. Four birds got up. I got one; the little man took another, making a beautiful shot on a wild bird that rocketed toward the tree-tops. Dick retrieved his master's bird. I found mine without assistance—a hen bird so large that it brought a shout of astonishment from me.

Most of my quail shooting had been done in the deep South—in Louisiana, Mississippi, Florida and South Carolina—where the birds were, as a rule, a good deal smaller than the quail of Maryland and Virginia. All the quail we had shot on this particular day were fine large specimens; each one had brought forth comment from me. But this hen bird was truly as large as a squab chicken—a whopper, a prize. I handed it to the little man.

"Ain't seen many thet size," he admitted.

We dumped our bags together on the ground. The big hen was at least a third larger than the largest of the rest. I have kicked myself a dozen times since that I did not have that bird mounted, or at least authentically weighed.

The sweetly mellow autumnal afternoon drew on. By the time the sun was poised just above the hazy horizon, the little man had his limit of ten. I had nine—enough, I said, particularly as I had taken, in addition, two snipe, two doves and a woodcock. But he was particularly insistent that I fill out my bag. We turned homeward, cutting across the fields, leaving more than half of the marsh coveys undisturbed. There were other coveys scattered

about the farm. The little man had one of these in mind to round out my day.

Half the sun was below the horizon when the red dog began making game in a peafield. He carried a high head, this setter, and a merry flag. Even the little man found joy in watching him. Head up-flung, he advanced half the length of the field treading as though on eggs, then stopped abruptly, froze. He had the covey pinned on the edge of the field. It was a pretty exhibition, and I was very proud as I walked toward him.

Then, to my dismay, he pounced. The birds roared aloft but within long range. I shifted my finger to the rear trigger and held for a lively cock bird speeding away in the fading light. Fortune favored me; he dropped to the report. I voiced my satisfaction. Fine sport, the limit—a perfect afternoon!

“Well, sir,” the little man said cheerfully as Dick retrieved the bird, “we had a good afternoon. Let’s shoot some ducks in the mawnin’.”

THE ROMANCE OF REFORESTING¹

*A vivid tale of the work being done to
reestablish our forests*

By O. C. LEMPFERT

IN THE VAST, mountainous solitudes of this great country, there still remain standing thousands of acres of virgin timber, untouched by the lumber-jack's ax and unravaged by fire. But these acres represent the last virgin stand of softwoods upon this continent, and this last stand already has its back to the wall. It is fast being lapped away by destructive forest fires and lumbering operations so extensive that from fifty to three hundred acres are cut daily to satisfy the consumption of a single one of our larger mills.

From the first day that the giants of our primeval forests trembled and crashed to the ground under the blows of the lumberman's ax, up to the present moment, the virgin timber upon this continent has been waging a fight for its very existence. And the battle has been a losing one.

First to go were the forests along the Atlantic Coast. From Maine to Virginia, trees toppled to the ground in enormous quantities. And now a few weatherbeaten stumps serve as tombstones upon this vast battlefield where fell more than nine-tenths of our original forest. Little thought, however, was given to replenishing

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this land or conserving the remaining supply; but with feverish haste the wholesale lumbering operations were transferred to the Lake States.

Here, too, a beautiful and abundant forest was reduced almost to the point of annihilation; and once more the destructive warfare moved on. This time the Southern States were called on to meet the inevitable. Forests from Virginia to Texas staggered under the conflict until more than four-fifths of their ranks had been hewn down.

The gigantic building program of the country sent a continual cry to the mills for more and more lumber. To satisfy this demand the mills were always hungry for timber. Their jaws were ever open. And, like the charge of the immortal Light Brigade, the virgin forests advanced into the jaws of death and were "shattered and sundered," until now, at the present day, these forests are making their last stand in the West.

True, the country has been awakened to the fact that if they would have a timber supply in the future they must plant trees in the place of ones they cut down. But the public is a great body, and, as a proverb tells us, great bodies move slowly. And today, for every tree planted, four are being cut down. Our virgin timber is fighting its last fight and its back is to the wall.

But the story has not all been told. At last, help, long despaired of, is at hand. The public, far too long indifferent and complacent, has opened its eyes and become aroused at the impending calamity. State and nation, shaken to action at last by the recoil of the public's indignation, have launched a vast and far-reaching reforestation program which, though still in its infancy, has already begun to make itself felt.

Lands that for many decades have been unproductive will again flourish with a luxuriant crop of trees. Land that the ax has stripped bare of its original mantle of wood; land that has been transformed by fire from majestic forests and reduced to bare rocks, heaps of gray ashes and charred stumps, until the sight is sickening, will be replanted. And there is much of such land. It leaves a nasty impression to realize that where once towered huge

forests there are now 81,000,000 acres of unused, wasted earth that should be made to produce.

You have heard it said that figures are dull and lifeless; but if their proportions are ponderous enough, they become mighty things, with the power to rock their reader. And many might well stagger with surprise to learn of the millions of acres of idle land which are being put to no use under the sun, but which would, if once reforested and kept so, provide abundant wood for this country's every need forever.

During the three or four years that are required to produce stock large enough, strong enough, and otherwise suitable for reforesting, the trees must be cared for in nurseries. New York has many of these, such as the Central Islip, Comstock, Goldsmiths, Indian Lake, Salamanca, Saranac and others. The latest acquisition to the list is the thriving Lowville Nursery.

Well do I remember my first introduction to one of these nurseries. It was in the fall of '21. I was among six or eight others, a handful of the blister-rust outfit stationed at Tupper Lake that had come up to the Lake Clear Junction Nursery to help with the fall transplanting.

The trees, scarcely longer than three inches, were brought from the seed beds, tied in bunches, and transplanted in the nursery rows. The soil upon this location had been worked over and pulverized until the top coating was as fine as dust. And the wind kept it constantly shifting about, causing it to fill one's eyes, hair, mouth, nose and ears, and to work into and through one's clothing.

Two burlap-screened threading tables were placed upon this dusty, wind-swept spot. At each table were seated four threaders—men who took bunches of young trees from tightly packed tin pails, cut the strings that held them, and began threading them into the slots of the planting board. Then the board carriers (there were two at each table) took the board from the table and carried it out to the newly made rows.

Here were four more men, working with shovels, laying out new rows and digging trenches. The board carrier placed the

board along the top of the shallow trench, packed the dirt against the roots with the side of his foot, lifted his board clear, and the thing was done—fifty trees planted at a time. And so it went, hour after hour under a glaring sun; scorching on the dry, dusty field by day, and nearly freezing under our tents of canvas at night.

And what an outfit it was—men of various trades and many countries. There were village loafers, and lumber-jacks temporarily out of work, and college students and hoboes. At my table there was a gray-bearded Seventh Day Adventist from Cuba, a red-bearded Frenchman, two Canuck lads, an Irish lumber-jack, a Scandinavian deep-sea sailor, a college student from Staten Island, a hobo from Chicago and a Mohawk Indian.

Laughter and joking shortened the day, and once one of the threading tables and several pails of trees were upset and scattered about when two of the lumber-jacks engaged in a fist fight to settle a heated controversy as to which could make the better pancakes. But through it all the planting went on, row after row, until the work was finished; and uncounted thousands of tiny, green-topped trees stood glistening in the sun, ready to do their bit in the country's great reforestation program.

My next connection with reforestation was in the spring of 1923. The setting was again the Adirondack Mountains; and the exact location was the barren, deserted country between Newcomb and Minerva. Here, in an open field, were pitched ten or twelve tents, white and prominent against a dark, ragged, towering background of lofty spruce trees. These canvas shelters were home to some twenty or thirty men who were on the pay-roll of the New York State Conservation Commission.

They were all boys, some sixteen and some sixty. A good portion of them were natives, glad to have the chance to earn the money that the state offered. Others came from long distances away—drifters, led by the lure of the open; and some were fresh from the city pavements. But no matter who they were, or whence they had come, they were assembled for one paramount purpose—to plant trees.

In the gray dawn of morning, they could be seen filing out of

the big cook tent and going to a long, shallow trench, where a great number of tightly tied bunches of young trees were heeled in. These bunches were tossed into galvanized pails and the procession started, each man carrying a pail of trees and sometimes two.

Stringing out several feet apart, they were quickly swallowed up by the dark woods, only to emerge again far along on some ridge, from the distance appearing like a silent, moving silhouette against a gray sky. Then dipping down again into a valley, they would cross streams and thread narrow swamps, until at last they reached the spot where the planting had last been done the day before. Here half of the outfit would collect the bog-hoes that had been left upon the spot, and then form into crews.

A crew consisted of two men; one who carried the pail of trees, and the other who swung the bog-hoe. All the crews worked side by side, a long line of them. The procession started.

A bog-hoe swung through the air and descended into the soft ground with a thud, the heavy metal blade buried to its very head. The wielder would then pry the handle down to the ground, causing the blade end of the tool to force the earth apart. Into this small opening the other member of the crew would insert one of the five-inch trees. The first man would withdraw his bog-hoe, press the opening together with one quick motion of his heel, and then on, eight feet farther, where the operation would be repeated.

The country was as bare and desolate as the lumberman's ax and fire could leave it. Acres upon acres of it had lain there year after year, wasted and a total loss; but we were reclaiming it.

Down the brow of a barren slope swept the swiftly moving string. The long line of flashing bog-hoes and bending backs came on, leaving row after row of tiny, green-topped trees behind them. In the years to come a mighty forest would serve as a monument, marking their hurried passage.

As the sun rose higher the heat increased and throats became parched. Good water was scarce, and the sight of a spring was as welcome as the pay checks that came twice a month. Some, un-

able to withstand the terrific heat, drank from pools of stagnant water and paid the price of contracting swamp fever.

Midges, mosquitoes and black flies attacked the perspiring workers mercilessly. Arms grew weary, backs ached cruelly, legs became cramped, and soft hands were torn and blistered; but the line held together and swept steadily on. And when the work was done, 600,000 Scotch pine stood rooted in the ground, a glowing tribute to that line's faithfulness.

But let no one suppose that the story ends here. Unceasing vigilance must be the price if those seedlings are to grow into a forest of beauty and benefit. Only a few months ago a fire destroyed a twenty-year-old planting of white pine at Lake Placid. In 1919 there were 27,000 fires reported throughout the country! Who can estimate those which were not reported? Eight and a quarter million acres were burned over. One careless camp fire, and that whole line's work becomes undone.

MARLIN AND MAN-EATERS¹

The thrill of big-game fishing in Australian waters

By ZANE GREY

THE TAKING of the Australian record striped spearfish, or marlin—324 pounds—rounded out four centuries for me. It was my four hundredth round-billed spearfish!

By the way, spearfish is the correct name for this fish, distinguishing it from the broadbill swordfish. The name swordfish is a misnomer. Marlin is all right, because that name was first bestowed upon this fish by sailors, owing to its bill resembling a marlin spike. I had visitors at camp in Australia, who had never seen such a fish, ask me why it was called swordfish and where was the sword.

The fishing incidents leading up to the capture of this 324-pounder were as interesting as the catch itself. At Bateman's Bay we had several big runs of marlin. Then, just when the crux of each run had come and we had reason to anticipate a killing next day, wind and storm and rough sea ruined our chance. That happened three times. On two occasions, the last day of two runs, I had big days; and on the third occasion, the last day of the run before a storm, I had my best day. It really was good.

That day the *Undoyou*, with Bowen and Emil on the rods, ac-

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counted for three marlin and two sharks, and they lost half a dozen fish. One of these, falling to Bowen's rod, weighed 310 pounds, which beat the Australian record before I came along toward sunset with mine.

This was one grand fishing day. We were eight miles off the Toll Gates in a dark-blue, ripply sea, with porpoises and schools of bait all around, when we struck into the marlin.

I landed two husky marlin, upward of 290 pounds, before I had a hunch that there might be a run of big fish on. Then I raised one that looked away over 400. He was long, thick, deep. He was leery of my bait, but he charged the teasers repeatedly. Once he hit the port teaser and knocked it out of the water. After that he sheered away, to my intense disappointment.

Presently, seeing the *Undoyou* maneuvering around, we ran over and found Bowen in trouble. He was on a big fish that was giving him a good drubbing.

"Go 'way!" yelled Ed, red in the face. "You'll make me lose him." That was what he always said.

"You've got on too much drag," I called through my megaphone.

"Wait till—you see—this bird," panted Ed.

"Hey!" yelled Andy, the cameraman. "We raised six. Six! I lost mine. This one Ed's got is a whale."

"Six! Say, what're we up against?" I asked. "Oh! There he is. That's a swell big marlin, Ed. You're working him too hard."

"Go 'way. I'm gonna pull his shirt off. The ocean's full of marlin. No time to monkey."

"A bird in the hand is worth two in the sea," I replied, and sat down. "Beat it, Peter. Maybe Bowen's right. He's got on the biggest marlin that we've seen so far on this trip."

We had not trolled half a mile farther when I raised and hooked another. He turned out to be a stubborn fish that stayed down and would not surface. It took me forty-five minutes to subdue him.

"Ed broke off his fish," Gus informed me. "I had the glass on him. Was he burned up! Looked like he was going to throw away

his rod and kill the boatman. I could see his fish run under the boat."

We trolled on farther off shore. Once I saw a sickle-shaped fish in riding a swell. It did not reappear. Peter said he saw splashes farther out. Presently we saw that the Bowen outfit had raised another fish.

Long before that, I had agreed with Peter that it was a fishy day. It dawned on me then that it was more than that, and might develop into an extraordinary one. The farther off shore we trolled, the more fishy the sea looked. Ahead, I saw the spread-sheeted splash made by a marlin, two miles or more away. A little while afterward I saw one leap clear, shining silver in the sunlight. I told Peter.

"Right-o. I just saw one to port, and not far out. Looks like a day."

"Shouldn't we pull our baits in and shoot out a mile or two?" I asked.

"What for? There's a fin behind your bait now."

It was so. I had hardly sighted it when it vanished, and the marlin it belonged to, or another, came shooting sidewise across our wake. He sheered back again. This is always a thrilling sight. Almost all such acting marlin will strike. This one did, only he sped past my bait, which was farther out, and took Emil's. Away he went, while the gang whooped and I reeled in my bait.

Peter threw the clutch, and when the boat slowed up I let my bait sink. Very often we get a second strike that way. It is a good move. But nothing happened this time, and when Emil hooked his fish I drew my bait in and climbed on the deck in order to see better.

Emil's quarry proved to be a heavy-shouldered marlin close to 300 pounds, and he did not jump enough to tire himself. Usually such fish were stubborn fighters. When this one sounded deep down, I devoted myself to scanning the sea. Nevertheless I could still hear the kidding remarks made by Gus and Peter to Emil, who was always very serious and scared while fighting a fish.

Off to starboard I saw a black fin cutting the surface. Then, to

the left of this one, a white splash showed. My next observation was that Bowen had hooked another marlin. This proved too much for even my equanimity.

"The ocean's alive with marlin!" I exclaimed. "If we were ten miles farther out in that warm current, we might run into swarms of marlin like those fellows did off Bermagui last summer. Pull that one in, Emil."

That was much easier said than done. Emil performed creditably for upward of an hour, during which period I saw more and more sign of surfacing bait that was being chased by fish. It is always a keen sight to see a school of pilchard or piper leap across the water.

Emil landed his marlin, the largest he had caught. As there was no room left on the stern for another, it had to be pulled up on the bow. While the boys were doing this work I dropped my bait overboard and let it sink. I don't know whether or not this is a bad habit of mine, but it does get me into trouble. Three times out of ten, it is productive of bites. In unknown waters, where you might get a strike from anything, I think it good fishing.

Anyway, my bait had not sunk far when some denizen of the deep took it and whizzed the line off my reel. There is never any sure way to tell what kind of fish strikes like that. But I was positive this was another marlin. So I let him run.

He kept going faster and faster, until he had five hundred yards of line off, and I grew alarmed. Then I put on the drag and let the fish hook himself. When the crew returned aft, they found me hooked on again. They made jubilant and facetious remarks.

"Pete, better chase this bird," I said grimly.

We did chase him, but even so I had a hard time getting back most of that line. The fish did not come up. He was heavy and had everything. I could not tell what it was. Always the hope persisted that such a fish would be a broadbill or a black marlin. Then the growing evidences of more fish surfacing all around us compelled me to work strenuously. To land the one you have on so that you can hook another—that is always the weakness you sink to when you meet with a big run.

How long I heaved and wound on that fish before I grew tired I did not keep track of. But it must have been long. I did know, however, when I began to fail to do much with the plugger. Hot and wet and mad, sore-handed and lame in the back, I toiled on. The ethics of the sport demanded it. I could not pass the rod to Emil or Gus, because my fish might turn out to be a prize.

Bowen's boat trolled and drifted and fought fish until it was almost out of sight. Mid-afternoon came and passed. The Toll Gates began to take on a cast of purple, and the mountains in the west were rimmed in gold. I should have been happy, but strangely I was not. Probably I had a growing suspicion that this fish I had on was phony. For two hours and more, however, he had acted like a deep-fighting broadbill or black marlin.

It took nearly three hours to whip that fish, during which period all of us together had sighted fifty-odd marlin around and near us. The horizon was dotted with white splashes. If we had ever had a chance to run out . . .

When I wearily hauled the leader to Pete's gloved hands and he yelled, "Whaler shark!" I was so disgusted and angry and exhausted that I just sank limp. The crew made short work of that ugly brute.

"He was foul-hooked!" shouted Gus. No wonder I had had such a grueling job! I was as wet as if I had fallen into the water, and as hot as fire. It had been my hardest day by far. My arms were numb and my palms puffed and red.

"Of all the rotten luck!" I burst out. "Big run of marlin, and I had to fall foul of that beast! Let's beat it for camp."

We were ten miles off the Toll Gates. The whole west presented a wondrous spectacle of cloud and color. A luminous purple haze veiled the sentinel rocks, high against the sky. I saw these things without enthusiasm, a sure sign that I was not myself. Seven hours of fighting fish had about used me up, and with my physical strength went my spiritual.

Taking a comfortable seat on the side deck of the *Avalon*, facing the bow, I settled myself to rest and recover. Hardly had we run a couple of hundred yards when Gus' stentorian yell brought

me erect, transfixed and thrilling. Even as I whirled around to see what was up Peter and Emil roared in unison. In plain sight there were five marlin back of the teasers and the one bait Gus had out.

"Swell work, Gus!" I yelled, coming out of my trance.

"Chief, there's a whopper in that bunch. He's in under now. There he comes, look out!"

Then my sweeping gaze fell upon a long, round, thick-bodied striped marlin, lilac and blue, fighting the other marlin. Gus stood up with the end of the 20-foot leader in his hand. He had trolled the bait that way.

"Grab that other teaser," shouted Peter as he caught the line of the starboard one.

Quick as he was, a marlin hit the teaser with a ringing crack. Emil recovered from his fright to snatch the other teaser right out of the jaws of a marlin.

Ordinarily, in such a case, I would have stood up to watch the *mêlée* and let Gus get his strike. But I gazed down upon the biggest striped marlin I had seen in Australian waters. That was too much. We did not want to miss him. Leaping down, I snatched the line from Gus' hand.

"Put out another bait, and hurry!" I ordered.

"Bait all gone," interposed Peter.

"Too bad. We had a box full of bait. Now—let's see. Work those teasers."

The one marlin that had hit the starboard teaser had dropped back. But he was still there, still curious. The other four presented a marvelous picture of beauty, color, speed and savagery as they sheered to and fro.

When one of the smaller ones rushed my bait, I would pull it away from him. Then I would let it back. I did not want to risk letting line out because I could not have controlled that situation. They were ravenously hungry. I had no doubt but that I could lure some of them, and perhaps the huge one, right up to the stern, and hand him the bait. I actually did that once off the east end of Clemente Island.

The big marlin hung close under the bait, pretty deep down. Big marlin will do that, in which case you should watch for a sudden rush. This fellow made a pass at a bold marlin that almost got the bait. I was sure he stuck him, too, for that marlin put it in high and left us, swift as a blue streak. But I did not see any blood.

Pulling my bait in a few feet and letting it back, I waited and watched, full of tingling sensations, absolutely sure of a strike. It was a grand situation, and I reveled in it. There was a fine chance to study the actions of hungry marlin. But all I could do was see and feel.

"It won't be long now," shouted Gus happily. "Gosh, if that isn't a sight!"

"Look out!" bawled Peter.

The three surfacing marlin charged my bait simultaneously. I jerked wildly to keep it from them. But they hit it, and knocked it into the air. As it fell I actually pulled it out of a gaping maw.

"Better let go," advised Pete. "They'll knock it off—then we won't get any strike."

I thought likewise, yet still I hoped to raise the big fellow. One marlin missed the bait and shot clear up to the stern; another rushed it from the side, whacking at it with his spear. That separated them momentarily, in which time the big fellow from below loomed up swiftly. He came straight up, his wide jaws extended, and they closed on my bait.

I let go the line with a wild yell and straddled my rod. The boys were shrieking. Pete threw out the clutch. The three marlin hung back there, swerving to and fro, baffled. My line slipped off the reel. What a splendid strike! I was all aglow.

But before I could do anything the marlin leaped—a huge purple-striped fish—whirling the bait round his head. Quick as a flash I threw on the drag. Peter as quickly shoved the clutch in. Bait and hook were on the far side of the marlin. The leader was between his wide-spread jaws. In a twinkling, while he was yet in the air, we pulled the leader through. The hook caught, and the

impact threw that marlin flat. But he was hooked. I really did not need to strike as I did.

He leaped. Oh, what a beautiful lofty tumble into the air! He fell back with an enormous splash, and cracked out again.

"Count his jumps!" I yelled.

Then, as if I had read his instinctive fury aright, that marlin proceeded to leap all over the ocean. I could not keep a tight line. I counted nineteen leaps before I lost track. He walked on his tail, wagging his great broad shoulders. Like a smacking board, he fell flat. He made a series of greyhound bounds, magnificent to see. He threshed the water into foam. There was scarcely a moment when he did not break the surface. All the time I gained line, until he was close to the boat. It appeared that he gathered speed and fury as the battle progressed.

All at once he soused back into the water and lay on his side. He was done. I dragged him up to us. We had him gaffed and roped in short order. The fight had been incredibly short. He had killed himself in the air. That was how I captured the Australian striped marlin record—324 pounds.

But as remarkable as that whole action was, it could not compare to the change in me. I marveled at myself. I might never have been tired. Gone the extreme irritation and unreasonable anger. My pulse beat high. I felt full of elation. The whole fishing circumstance was exceedingly wonderful. Never had I gazed at the gold and purple clouds, the fading red fire of the sun, the glory of the green hills, the beauty and color and movement and mystery of the sea with more all-satisfying appreciation, with more sensitive response to the joy of the great open, to a realization of the strange renewal of youth and sensation that abides in fishing.

South of Bateman's Bay and ten miles off Cape Burly, we ran into a trio of trawlers working a wide area of waters that must have netted them tons of fish. Many as have been the trawlers I have seen, I never before fished among them. This was a curious and unique experience, valuable to any fisherman.

These trawlers crisscrossed this twenty miles of ocean, and about every two hours they halted to haul up their nets. These had

wooden doors and an opening thirty or forty feet wide, which traveled along the bottom, scooping up all kinds of fish. We saw only the rubbish they threw overboard, consisting of small rays, fiddlers, sharks, porcupine fish and a red-colored big-eyed fish that appeared to have burst upon the surface. We also saw barracuda, leatherjacks and other fish.

They floated in confusion along the surface in the track of the trawler, most of them alive but swimming upside down. Gulls, shear-water ducks (mutton birds) and the great wide-winged albatross reaped a harvest that the sharks had not time to get. The sharks, however, were busy enough. I saw dozens of whalers, a few hammerheads, several large pale sharks that kept deep down and a number of marlin in the wake of these ships.

It was exceedingly interesting to watch them, aside from the possibility of raising a swordfish. The screaming of the seafoal, the colored fish lying scattered all over the wakes, the big dark fins and tails of sharks milling about, an occasional swirl and splash on the water, and lastly the passing to and fro of the trawlers afforded a moving and thrilling spectacle for an angler.

I took that all in as I trolled to and fro, following the ships. Swordfish fins were occasionally sighted, and we raised a number. They had fed, however, and would not take a bait, and their interest appeared to be solely in the teasers.

Two days of this working with the trawlers did not earn us a single marlin. We caught several, though only after we had run far out of the zone of the trawlers. I tried a third day, finding it hard to resist those big sickle tails that we caught sight of rarely. I was, of course, on the lookout for a big black marlin.

Still I kept a weather eye open for a big shark, and was not particular what breed he was. Among the trawlers, it was not unusual to see a dozen whaler sharks all in a bunch, sticking their ugly dark noses out, gulping down fish into their wide mouths.

That third day, coming upon two big ones close together, I said to Emil, "Let's have a go at these!"

We were each soon fast to a heavy fish. A whaler will usually take a long fast run. Mine did this, while Emil's, evidently a huge

fish, merely went down. Our boatman, Peter, was at a loss what to do. In the mêlée, however, Emil's shark got off and I was left to battle a stubborn heavy brute.

We caught up with him, and then he was off again. After this second run he sounded deep, and invited me to see what I could do about it. After an hour or so of getting him up and having him go down again, I began to suspect that I had hold of a big fellow. Therefore, I called upon patience and reserve strength to make a sure thing of catching him.

The fight was interesting because it was exactly what Mr. Bullen, the Sydney shark expert, said was the way the great tiger worked. I was acquiring practice and experience, at considerable loss of sweat, labor and enthusiasm. This son-of-a-gun stayed in one place, it appeared. I had to pump and wind, pump and wind, monotonously and continuously. I would get him up to the double line, and then down he would go again. I had that work to do over and over. His evident size, however, kept me nailed to my post; and after over two hours of hard work I had him coming.

My first sight of this whaler was a flash of gold, and as he came closer up he changed color from that to dark green, and finally black. He was a sullen-eyed, surly brute that made striking the gaff into him a keen, savage sort of pleasure.

When Peter sent the steel home, I yelled, "Mr. Whaler, you'll never kill another human being!"

That idea had seemed to obsess me all along, and it grew stronger. This whaler was big and heavy and mean. On the gaff he raised hell, wet us thoroughly and made everybody mad. He was too big to haul up on the stern; so we had to tow him fifteen miles to camp—a long, slow trip.

I gambled with the boys on his weight, which I wagered was over 900 pounds, but as usual I lost, for he weighed only 890. He was 12 feet long—a mighty big fish.

A Mr. Wallace and companion fisherman, staying at Bateman's Bay, came in one day with a 600-pound shark, which they had fought for forty minutes and then shot. They could not identify it, and asked me to do so, which I was glad to be able to do. Sharks

can always be identified by their teeth, provided you know shark teeth.

Fortunately in this case it was easy, as the large triangular upper teeth, serrated, and the smaller, less triangular lower teeth belonged to that rare species of the Seven Seas—the white pointer, less commonly known as the white death. This fellow grows to 40 feet and more in length, and teeth have been found in the ooze from the bottom of the sea so large that they must have belonged to sharks 80 feet long—a fearful monster to conjure up in imagination.

I had seen at least two of these rare and great sharks, one at Rangiroa, in the Paumotus, and the other off Montague Island. Naturally, I was hoping to catch one. My interest grew apace.

So far as I can ascertain, only three of this species have been caught in Australia: one, 18 feet long, shot and harpooned at Bermagui; another, larger, which was captured by a whaler off Eden, and a third of 39 feet, which was vouched for by Dr. Stead. My boatman, Peter, harpooned one at the whaling station near Russell, New Zealand. It was 23 feet long, and would have weighed far over a ton. I saw the jaws of this one, and they were indeed formidable. A good-sized man could sit down inside of them.

My hopes of striking a white death shark on the south coast had almost waned when, three days before we shifted camp at Bateman's Bay, I sighted what I thought was one at Black Rock. He had the same shape and the same dorsal fin with which I had familiarized myself. Only he appeared to be much darker in color.

Peter was not keen about closer acquaintance, but that certainly did not hold for me. I cautioned him to keep wide as we dragged a freshly cut bait across in front of the shark. If the fish saw it, he gave no sign. Again we ran in front of the brute, and closer this time. In fact, we went pretty close. I saw his peculiarly blunt nose and the protruding upper lip, which allowed the big white arrow-head-shaped teeth to show. That was a sight to chill the blood. He was lazily riding the waves, his bold staring black eyes on the boat. Surely he saw us. But he ignored the bait.

"Throw something at the blighter," yelled Peter.

"Nope. Go closer next time," I replied.

On this third attempt, before we got even with the shark he made a swift and savage run. There was a splash, a crack—and he sheered away swift as a marlin. The instant I recovered from this surprising procedure, I jammed on the drag and struck. If that shark did anything, he struck back at me. Then, when I had him hooked, he performed the old amazing thrilling trick of the mako—he came for us. I had to wind fast to reel in the line.

There he was! Only the length of my leader! And that was thirty feet.

"What'll we do now?" I shouted, aghast.

"Hang on to the double line," replied Peter, and he dived into the cabin for the gaff.

The swivel of the leader was against my rod tip. I had no trouble in holding the shark. He had turned at right angles with us and was swimming along with the boat, a few feet under. Presently he came up, so that his pale dorsal fin stood up out of the water. He was not white by any means, but he was light-colored, and stream-lined in shape, and sinister of aspect. He looked large, too, fully as large as my biggest whaler.

"Pete, what are you going to do?" I called as he came out with gaff and rope.

"Let's have a go at him."

"It's too soon. If you failed to get the gaff in good, he'd drown us and get away."

On the other hand, if we hurt him and he ran off, it was almost a certainty that he would take long to drag in again. I debated the question. If it had not been a white shark, I would not have hesitated. But during that moment of vacillation the shark made up his mind, and he ran off two hundred yards as fast as any marlin ever went. Then he stopped, but did not sound. He just fought the leader, and as I put all my weight and strength into the task we had it nip and tuck. I could always fight a fish far away from me better than one near at hand. For my pains, however, I got very little line in.

"Shall I run up on him?" asked Peter.

"No. I'll pull him back or break him off," I replied as, baffled and resentful, I worked with renewed vigor.

I did not keep track of the time, but it was far from being short. I had enough of this white shark to guess at what a 20-footer would be like. And in due course, when I pulled the leader up within reach, I was wet and panting, and mad at my ineffectual attempt.

He went under the boat; so we had to keep moving. Peter hauled on the leader in a way to alarm me. And he was swearing, always with Peter a sign of impatience and effort. Emil stood with the big gaff, ready to hand it to the boatman, while I loosened my harness hooks and the drag on the reel.

"Drop the leader overboard," I cautioned as always.

I saw the shark come out from under the boat. He had rolled over on the leader. The bright steel flashed. Crash! Then all was lost in a maelstrom of flying white spray and green water.

"Let him run on the rope," I shouted.

"I can hold him. Emil, get a tail rope," replied Peter.

It required some time to put a noose over that threshing tail, during which I stood there, ready to carry on should the shark break away. Once roped, however, he gave up with little more ado.

We tried to haul him up on the stern, but he was too heavy. Therefore we towed him the three miles to camp. Night had fallen when we arrived, so that we could neither weigh nor photograph him. The boys pulled him up on the bank, however, and left him there. After supper I went to look at him, and found he was growing dark in color. He appeared to be a soft-fleshed shark that would shrink much over night.

Next morning we stayed in camp a few hours to photograph this specimen. He was not as large, though nearly so, as my big whaler. And allowing for the percentage of shrinkage, he weighed 840 pounds. He had turned a grayish black in color. His pectorals were large. His round lower end and the flange where it joined

the tail resembled both that of a mako and a broadbill swordfish, but was more like the latter.

Close study of this shark identified it as immature. He really was a youngster of that species. But for me he was a notable catch, a different and splendid shark, and I was proud of having got him and of adding that terrible white-fanged jaw to my collection. I made a reluctant and secret observation, too, and it was that I was going to be scared of a giant shark of his class.

It turned out that for me the capture of this white pointer shark (*Carcharodon carcharias*) was not only my most notable catch in Australia, but one calculated to have far-reaching effects upon my future fishing.

Much information came to me. This beast had various names—white pointer, gray pointer, great white shark. The aborigines of North Australia called it white death. On these northern coasts of Australia when one of these white sharks rushes a man, he is lost. No man ever escaped the charge of this white monster.

Off Sydney Heads market fishermen have sighted white sharks that were 40 feet in length. Dr. Stead has seen teeth from white death sharks which must have been 80 feet long.

On several occasions off Sydney Heads, when market fishermen have been towing in a shark too large to get on the boat—12 to 14 feet is the average length—a huge white shark has taken the towed shark in one single bite. I verified this in talks with the market fishermen. And we found that the quickest way to catch a big shark was to use a smaller one for bait. Dr. Stead and I agreed that it would be possible to catch one of these white monsters. I would be willing to try to catch a small one on a rod, but I imagine a 20-footer would be the limit. Special tackle would need to be designed and built to catch a full-grown white death shark.

The idea fascinated me. It grew upon me. My book, *Tales of Man-Eating Sharks*, will prove hundreds of tragedies and fatalities. Why not go back to Australia and the Indian Ocean to catch not merely a 20-foot black marlin and a bigger tiger, but an 80-foot white death? What fisherman could resist that?

SHOTGUN FUN IN ALASKA¹

*Waterfowl and shore birds without limit and
ptarmigan in numbers almost unbelievable*

By FRANK DUFRESNE

WE MIGHT HAVE STAYED within two or three miles of Nome and shot all the ducks, ptarmigan and other small game we wanted, but instead we chose to go a couple of hundred miles down the coast to one of the wildest spots on Seward Peninsula to do the very same thing. The fact of the matter is we were looking for a little experience to go with our hunting—and we went to just the right place at the proper time to get it good and plenty.

'Twas the thirtieth of August, bright, blue, sunny and calm, that Woodie, Jim and I embarked with due ostentation on the little schooner Nokatak, bound from Nome to the wild Norton Bay country, a couple of hundred miles away.

"I'm gonna reduce," announced Woodie. "Here I am tipping the scales at 216, and my proper fighting weight is just 200 fat."

"I wanta build up," said Jim, "and a poor married man like me needs a change to do it. I want to visit the silent places—the silenter the better."

"I propose to blind swap a roll-top desk and a mean working typewriter for what's going to happen," was my contribution, and with these few words the compact was fused, along with the further agreement that the first man to weaken would die a horrible death at the hands of the other two.

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The skipper of the Nokatak was the busiest man north of Fifty-four. He steered the boat, maneuvered the sails, looked solicitously after a sick native girl, did the cooking, washed and wiped the dishes, and smoked steadily all the while on the shortest cigarette in the world, buried deep within the recesses of a bristly black mustache.

We watched with the air of small boys and a sputtering cannon cracker to see the skipper's "walrus" go up in smoke, but he must have regularly applied some kind of fireproofing liquid, because it never happened.

Anyway, that skipper could do more work, and cook faster and better than any man I ever saw. Regularly every four hours we sat down to a groaning table. Twenty minutes later, by the ship's clock, that table would be as bare as Mother Hubbard's cupboard.

We would then obligingly remove ourselves to the deck, leaving the skipper to clean up the ruins and prepare for the next onslaught. Though the weather was far from ideal, even stormy in spots, the trailing sea gull and hungry herring found us utterly unresponsive.

Our first stop was near the mouth of the Ungalik River, a wild and woolly spot indeed. This territory of lakes and lagoons, with its background of chiseled, white-capped hills, has only one white man and half a dozen Eskimos in all its five hundred square miles.

Ducks and geese waddled about in perfect unconcern and cocked their heads at us with an air of innocent inquiry that was tragic, considering the shotguns we carried. Breathlessly we waited some luckless bird to rise that we might spatter his frame with bird-shot, but nary a bird would rise. No amount of shooting or waving of the arms could scare them.

It seemed that we were looking at ducks which never before had seen a human. The old birds were not yet through molting and the young ducks didn't know any better. We shot enough for our immediate needs aboard the ship and quit in disgust. Thousands of birds—and the worst hunting I ever had!

Along about noon of the next day the Nokatak ran aground and stuck. The skipper had been plunging a red and white striped

pole into the water for some time; so I suppose it was no great surprise to him. To the uninitiated, it was something out of the ordinary to be stuck out there, fully ten miles from the most beautiful shore in the world, on a boat that only drew three and a half feet of water.

The trio held a council of war and after eating (we didn't slip up on that) heaved the dory overside.

"All ashore that's going!" bawled Woodie, with cupped hands, and into the dory piled the three musketeers.

I remember now the kindly old skipper had some parting words of advice to give us, but we didn't have time to wait for them. An immense flock of snow-white geese winged their way by at just that particular moment and with much gabbling, squawking and ado came to rest on the water a mile or so away.

"Look a' them ol' white boys!" yelled Jim, drowning out the skipper's words.

Away we went, pulling like mad at the oars and filling the guns with No. 2 chilled. We'd found some birds that could fly.

They flew all right. We didn't get within two hundred yards of them before they rose like a white blanket from the water, but nothing daunted, we continued on toward shore. We were half-way in and doing fine when a very strange and unbelievable thing happened—the rowboat ran aground and stuck.

"Maybe it's just a bar," ventured I, after a long and terrible silence fraught with intense and sulphuric thought. "Let's get out and push over it, anyway."

Five hours later we were still pushing that heavy old dory through three inches of water and twice that much of soft, slimy, sticky muck! The calm, sunny afternoon gave way to a chilly evening breeze, freighted with damp, cutting fog. Darkness came on apace, bringing with it its horrid brood of treacherous, mysterious pot-holes into which we would occasionally take a header.

We were soaking wet, covered with mud, very weary, and shivering in spite of our strenuous labors, when Woodie, who was ahead dragging on the rope, suddenly plunged out of sight. As he came up, spouting blue muck and water, there issued from him the most unexpected thing.

"Eureka!" shouted he of the fast disappearing waist line. "I've found the channel. This water's fresh."

Ten minutes' stiff work at the oars landed the three bedraggled "experiencers" on the dusky shores where we had planned such a fine time that afternoon.

There was an old deserted, tumble-down cabin of spruce logs at the mouth of the river, still visible in the twilight, and toward this we stumbled. Off to the left a quarter mile, a cock ptarmigan sent out a challenging, truculent "Come back!" before going to sleep.

I accepted the challenge. The fates were kind to me. After struggling through innumerable slough holes, I pushed my way into a thicket of willows and ran plump on to a flock of perhaps a score of ptarmigan. As they thundered up from about me and away, a random shot into the gloom brought down several, two of which I was lucky enough to find.

I peeled their jackets off, gathering a big handful of the wild onions which grow here so abundantly, and reached the cabin with these "makin's" about the same time a kettle of rusty-looking water had been brought to a boil. Into this pot went the two birds and the pungent wild onions.

Woodie (he who fain would have reduced) smelled and rummaged about in odd corners of the cabin, coming to a point now and then like a weary, though still eager, setter dog in the brush. Occasionally we heard him whine with joy—and once or twice a profane growl of bitter disappointment escaped him. Finally he appeared with the fruits of his hunt: a double handful of much abused macaroni, some rice mixed with a strange, dark foreign substance and some other stuff that might have been tapioca—or might not have been.

Without investigating it too closely, we tossed it into the boiling pot. A chunk of rock salt from an ancient and smelly fish keg completed the potion. Never have I tasted a "mulligan" more supreme!

We dug up some old caribou skins and patchy brown bear hide to sleep on and, with the aid of the fire, passed a fairly comfortable

night. At daybreak we were awakened by the siren whistle of the Nokatak within a few yards of the cabin. She had sailed in on the high tide that now covered the flats to a depth of six or eight feet.

Hastily we threw our possessions into the dory and, like prodigal triplets, came home. Without a word, the three of us clambered up over the rail, filed down into the little cabin, arranged ourselves around the mess table, and with tears of contrition in our eyes gazed appealingly at the captain. Good old skipper! I'll never forget him. He knew our weakness.

Waiting on the back of the stove were steaming hot coffee, ham and eggs, with fresh-made biscuits that might well have graced milady's breakfast table. After it was all over, we showed our everlasting appreciation by cutting up a box of cigarettes into the skipper's favorite length of half an inch and presenting them to him with some little ceremony and a rather touching speech by Woodie.

The trip that day was like a beautiful dream. We entered the Koyuk River and traveled up its length thirty miles to a place called the Landing, consisting of two or three log cabins—the only settlement on the river. The day itself was a wonder—sun shining through big, puffy, white clouds, with not a semblance of a ripple breaking the water ahead.

A perfect mirror of bank, clouds and sky met our eye on every hand. The river was never over a hundred yards across; most of the time the boat was brushing the trees of either one bank or the other.

The place fairly teemed with wild life. Cackling, Canada, and both the greater and lesser snow goose seemed to have nested all along the river in the lakes and sloughs bordering. Three times we saw flocks of swan. Ducks were not so numerous at the mouth of the river, although we did see many, mostly pintails, widgeons and green-winged teal.

Ptarmigan lined the banks and covered nearly every sand-bar, from which point they would rise with much cackling and calling to fly across the river and light on some other point a short distance ahead, where the same performance would be repeated over

and over again. It was a sight indescribably beautiful to see two or three hundred of these birds, at this season half white, fly across the river ahead of us with their reflected images, clean cut as so many cameos, speeding along beneath them.

We did no hunting that day. Just watched—and lived and gloried in it all.

At the landing the trio repaired to the nearby side-hills, where the native evergreen, or mossberry, grew so thick that one felt the mush of them beneath his feet. Ptarmigan, plover and curlew were feeding here by the thousands. Of course, the plover were too small to bother with, and the big hooked-bill curlew were protected by law; still it was great to see them about.

The sharp, whistling call of the golden plover and its sudden, twisting flight, together with the graceful, easy, swinging flight of the darker colored curlew, lent a perfect addition to the white-splashed ptarmigan which burst like exploding popcorn from the thick, low bushes.

We gave every bird a good flying start and enjoyed ourselves to the limit until our game coats hung heavy and full. I doubt if the equal of such hunting could be had anywhere in the world but Alaska. As far as the eye could see, for mile upon mile, these berry patches extended and there was every reason to believe they were covered with feeding birds as thickly as we encountered them about us. Outside of the few random shots we fired into them that day, I doubt greatly whether they were molested again through the remainder of the season.

We spent four delightful days at the Landing, living and sleeping at the log road-house. We would have stayed longer had not all the Eskimos in the country elected to share our domicile with us.

Earlier in this adventure I spoke of a sick native girl aboard the boat. She was mortally ill and expected to die shortly. By "Moccasin wireless" this news had percolated to all the Eskimos round about and, as is their custom, they assembled to witness the death and take part in the funeral.

One night, without warning, they started drifting into the road-

house. Before morning there were twenty-nine of them—bucks, squaws, and a couple of medicine men and witch women. The night was sultry and close and the stench from this bunch of Eskimos, none of whom had ever taken an intentional bath—and very few of any kind—was something awful.

I use the word "awful" with due thought and in its full sense. Rancid seal oil, rotten fish, putrid meats, combined with the personal odor of the Eskimos, which abler minds than mine have essayed to describe—and failed—proved too much for the three "experiencers."

Out of a troubled, odoriferous sleep I awoke to see Jim making frantic signals with his hands, signifying plainly an earnest desire to quit the place. The suggestion pleased me exceedingly. I got up and made my way over the sleeping forms of Eskimos on the floor to Woodie's bunk, just off the port bow of which slumbered a very fat and very old squaw. The odors emanating from her constituted a positive assault on one's olfactory nerves.

Woodie had put in a hard day and he was still sleeping. He snored fitfully, and ever and anon his nose wrinkled painfully as some especially powerful smell assailed it. Then he raised on one elbow. Out of a face wrinkled and seamed, two eyes, bloodshot with unutterable misery, looked at me.

"How are you sleeping?" I inquired solicitously.

"Rotten," answered Woodie wearily, covering every phase of the situation in one word.

I unfolded the plan to him, and an hour later in the gray dawn we were drifting downstream in the dory of the Nokatak, leaving a note on the kitchen table telling the captain what we had done and inviting his attention and cooperation at the earliest convenience. "Are you with us or agin us?" Woodie characteristically added under a P.S.

One man at the oars kept the dory headed straight, leaving the other two free to shoot. For a few miles downstream the bombardment was virtually continuous, and in spite of erratic shooting, caused by the man at the oars tipping or rocking the boat just when a fellow was going to shoot, a motley collection of

wildfowl covered the bottom of the boat. We were dangerously close to becoming game hogs, and we quit shooting.

We reached a point about noontime where a belt of dead spruces, about a quarter mile wide, crossed the river and extended in either direction out of sight in the unfolding hills. Perched atop these bare trees were many hawks and owls of divers varieties. A migration of some kind seemed to be in order.

However, the scientific end of the thing didn't bother us very long. We tied the dory up to the bank and devoted a couple of savage hours to eradicating these pirates of the air. More than a score of gos-hawks, falcons and snowy owls fell to our lot. The old expression "wild as hawks" certainly was excepted to here, for the birds either dozed sleepily on the crests of the spruces or sailed lazily and curiously overhead. We were still at them hammer and tongs when the whistle of the approaching Nokatak recalled us once more to reality—and a full meal.

It was not far now down the stream to the Norton Bay mud flats. We arrived there a little before sundown and, the water being quite low, anchored off a grass-covered point in the river channel.

On the low tide these flats were exposed for miles in extent for a period of six or eight hours, furnishing an excellent feeding place for myriads of shore birds. We noticed also a great many muskrats—small, darkish fellows, known among fur traders as the "black" muskrat. The Wilson's or jack-snipe was extremely plentiful, as was also both the Hudsonian and marbled godwit.

Everywhere we looked there were curlew and plover, along with innumerable smaller sandpipers and lesser shore birds. Most conspicuous of all, though, both in size and number, was the lordly sand-hill crane. I venture to say there were a thousand in sight at one time.

As we sat on deck in the gathering dusk we were startled by the yowl of a lynx close by, and peering closely, we distinguished him sitting up behind a clump of grass just beyond gunshot. Afar off, at the base of the foot-hills, came an answering cry.

The cranes gabbled nervously among themselves at these

sounds; one or two among the flock took awkward hops into the air to look around. They knew what this calling meant. Closer and closer together sounded the hoarse calls of the big cats, while between them the cranes stopped feeding and stalked nervously about with their heads high in the air.

It became too dark to distinguish either birds or cats. The calling of the lynx stopped, and after a while the notes of the cranes took on a sleepier, more assured tone.

Suddenly there came a burst of frightened squawks. The skyline filled with great flapping forms. As they drifted away in the gloom, chattering the while, we heard another bird that did not follow, squawking loudly and in terror. The sound became fainter and ceased, then there followed the blood-curdling call of the lynx that has made a kill. The other lynx must shortly have appeared on the scene to claim his share of the spoils, for we heard them savagely spitting and snarling at each other in the dark.

The noise of the smaller birds went on as though nothing had happened—a potpourri of sounds which would have made sleep impossible had not the rising tide driven them back until the lapping of the waters against the boat drowned them out altogether.

Our trip practically ends here. The skipper took advantage of the high waters during the night to put out to sea. Clear of the shoals, he headed due west and in a day or two, uneventful except for an exhibition or two of fancy eating by all concerned, the trio reached Nome and home, bronzed and hardened, ready again to do battle with any or all obstacles adversity might dare place in our respective pathways.

LIGHTNIN' RAP¹

A chicken-killing pointer that won a field trial—with the aid of a hawk

By HARVEY CHALMERS 2ND

THE EARLY MARCH WIND was strong and cold for Georgia. But on a bench in the lee of Will Hen Davidson's barn the sun was warm and comfortable. Overhead, a hawk wheeled against the blue. Faintly we heard it whistle. Will Hen took a bird call from the pocket of his leather coat and blew an imitation which caused the hawk to hover a moment before it soared on.

Turning, he asked, "What are you grinning at?"

I replied: "At your having the proper gadget in your pocket just as a hawk came along. It's rather a coincidence."

Will Hen's gaze wandered to a new and empty kennel at the end of a long row of filled ones. Finally it came to rest on a dog truck standing in the yard. Slapping my knee, he said:

"Right you are, fellow! But a coincidence isn't in my having a hawk call in my pocket. I've carried that like a lucky penny for the past two years. The coincidence is that a hawk should sail over just as I'm about to run over to Dalton to take Sambrook's Lightnin' Rap off the noon train. Had a wire yesterday that I could expect him. And the way I'm feeling, I could look down on that kite up yonder. Yes, sir! Lightnin' Rap is coming back to me at last."

"Lightnin' Rap!" I exclaimed. "I remember him. He was put

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down for a second series with a black and white pointer named Sambrook's Seaview Star in the Puppy Stake at Medford three years ago. It seems to me that Star won because Rap kept bumping his birds. Then Rap changed hands, and you won the Open All Age there with him last April. Who owned him at the time he won?"

A hard light came into Will Hen's gray eyes. "I owned him. But I never could prove it. Trouble is, I'm a dog handler, not a lawyer." He glanced at his watch. "Reckon there's time enough to explain how it happened. That is, if you'll understand I'm not putting up a squawk?"

I nodded. He went on with his story.

"Three years ago, right in the bottom of the depression, jobs weren't any more plentiful for dog handlers than for lots of other people. About the time that I was wishin' I was a dog myself, because I'd have a better chance of getting something to eat, along comes a slim old cuss with spats and an innocent baby smile, named Cyrus Z. Whitaker. He was a Yank in every sense of the word. To meet him casual like, you'd think that his interest in life was doing other people good. But if you got to know him, you'd add the words 'and plenty.'

"He made his money by going through the mountain districts of the South buying options on power sites, which he resold to utility companies at a handsome profit.

"And this is how he went about it. As soon as he decided that he wanted an option on a certain section of land, he'd go to the old cracker who owned it and say that he wanted to buy a bird dog. He specified a bird dog, not that he cared a straw about bird dogs or any other dog but because he'd heard that some of the big utility men were interested in that kind.

"He usually got a dog, too. You know how it is with a cracker. If he hasn't got a bird dog for sale, he most likely knows someone who has. Anyway, Whitaker had struck one of the two best ways for getting next to a cracker.

"After he got the dog, he'd have him trained and nominate him for some minor field trial. Whether the dog won or not wasn't

serious, because Whitaker could take a copy of the newspaper or magazine that reported the trial around to the cracker, show him the dog's picture and read him an account of the stake. Then they'd discuss what was best to be done to improve the dog's chances next time. And all the while not a word was said about the power site.

"However, after he'd wormed his way into the cracker's confidence, he'd persuade him to take over a mortgaged filling station or something, and give Whitaker an option on his land as security. Of course, the filling station wouldn't pay. That's why it was mortgaged. In the end, Whitaker would own the cracker's land for a song.

"As to the utility men, Whitaker figured that if he could hire a capable handler a few of the dogs he bought could be made into winners, and that would bring him favorable notice. He particularly had his eye on Lester Sambrook, president of one of the big utility companies and owner of the pointer you mentioned, Seaview Star.

"Not knowing any of this at the time, I was glad to sign a year's contract with Whitaker to handle his dogs. As it later turned out, the dog part of the bargain was honest enough.

"Two months after we made our agreement, a setter that Whitaker had bought for \$25 and turned over to me won a divided third in a small stake. He was offered \$50 for the dog on the field, and actually sold him a couple of hours later for \$57.50. That put a thought in his head. He'd expected to take a loss on dogs in promoting his land deals.

"'But hang it all!' he said. 'Why not make the consarned dogs pay their own way? Then I won't be out anything. I might even make a profit on them.'

"I earnestly assured him that the breeding and training of field-trial dogs was a sporting rather than a commercial proposition, and that, working twelve hours a day, I couldn't turn out even small-time winners faster than one a month. He caught my point, but I could see that his trading instinct had been aroused and that the thought of dog bargains would continue to rankle.

"And so it did. Then one day he drove into the yard with a big white and liver pointer in a crate lashed to his trunk rack.

"All in a twitter, he said: 'Will Hen, I've struck a bargain! Here's a dog that can do all those things you talk about, and do 'em well. And all he cost me was \$50. Give me a hammer. I want to get him out and show you. He's named Lightnin' Rap.'

"I asked him where he got the dog. He rattled on.

"'Bought him from Lester Sambrook. He beat me down on the price of some water rights, but I beat him when it came to the dog. One of his neighbors tipped me off to the dog's value.'

"I said, 'Drive right into the barn. We'll let him out behind closed doors. If he was sold by the Sambrook kennels, there was a reason for it.'

"We weren't long in finding it out. When we opened the crate, Rap jumped out and stood a minute in the gloom of the barn, blinking like a lion escaped from a cage. Then he spotted a hen roosting on the rim of the haymow. He made a lunge for that hen and picked her out of the air as she flew. 'There's your answer!' I said. 'The dog's a chicken thief. I'll bet there isn't an uncanned chicken today within a ten-mile radius of the Sambrook farm. No wonder the neighbors tipped you off!'

"Whitaker snorted. 'What do a few hens amount to? Turn him loose and let him show his stuff.'

"I told him that it couldn't be done; I'd have to teach the dog to mind first, and that would take several days at least.

"'Huh!' he said contemptuously. 'I thought you were a dog handler.'

"For answer I walked out into the shed and saddled my horse. Flinging open the barn door, I said, 'Back your car out and follow along the roads as close as you can. You're going to be in the poultry business in a big way. And I want you around to see it.'

"Well, sir, Rap went out of that barn like a fox out of a poultry shed. I promptly swung into the saddle and clattered along, trying to turn him. Each time I'd holler or whistle he'd just extend himself a little more, letting out another notch. He was a goer, that dog. If he hadn't quartered and cut up his ground, I couldn't

have kept him in sight at all. When he came up the side of a draw, he seemed to shoot right over the rim like a racing car out of control in a bowl track.

"He didn't locate any quail at first, but he spotted a farm mighty soon with the usual mess of chickens foraging the corn-patch. In he went. And boy, how the feathers flew! By the time I got there the farmer was out with a gun. I persuaded him to take it easy by assuring him that Whitaker was coming and would settle up.

"Rap had cleaned up the chickens and was starting on when Whitaker rolled into the farm-yard. Looking back over my shoulder as I followed the dog, I saw my boss with his hand on his pocketbook and the farmer carelessly waving the gun in Cyrus Z.'s direction.

"I was hoping that sooner or later Rap would tangle with some farm dog and while they were fighting I could snap a leash on him. There were plenty of farm dogs too, but they seemed to like Rap. One even joined him in slaughtering hens—a thing he'd probably been wanting to do for some time and hadn't dared.

"Twice Rap was shot at, and once he was clubbed before I could get there. But it made no difference. He was having himself a time, and wasn't going to stop while the chickens held out.

"No doubt he'd have been going yet if he hadn't happened to run slap into a covey of quail while passing from one farm to another. And the way he smashed into a spectacular point nearly lifted the hat off my head. However, it was no time to stand around admiring. The thing to do was to snap a leash on him.

"I led him out to the road, and a few minutes later along comes Cyrus Z. with the back of his car level full of chicken meat. Naturally, he'd picked up the chickens after he'd paid for them. He was like that.

"'Say, you blank blank so and so!' he sputtered. 'What's the matter with you? Why don't you control that dog?'

"Well, I should have pasted him one right then and there, but he looked so much like a red turkey gobbler against that background of white leghorn feathers that I got to laughing instead.

"When we got back, I explained matters as best I could. Having known of a similar case before, I made a guess at what was the matter with Rap. As I afterward discovered, I was about right.

"It seems that when Rap was bumping his bird in the Puppy Stake at Medford he jumped up and picked one or two out of the air. The birds happened to be released game-farm quail, and their wings were weak. Besides, Rap is quick—the quickest dog I ever saw.

"Having the stake in the bag because he owned both dogs in the second series, and not wishing Star to learn bad tricks, Sambrook asked permission to take up Rap. While leading Rap to the dog truck, Sambrook's kennel boy, who was a practical-minded ducky, had an idea.

"The ducky made a practice of asking to take Rap out on a leash for exercise. No one dreamed that the object of the daily walk was to build up a strong friendship between Rap and some farm dog.

"As soon as the two dogs were pals the kennel boy would sneak out at night with Rap and turn him loose in that farm-yard. You know how chickens are allowed to roost on the lower branches of trees, especially when there's a watch dog around. Well, Rap would swiftly and silently clean the limbs while the ducky followed with a bag.

"Of course, the scheme was discovered after a while. But by that time Rap was a confirmed chicken thief. And that's how Cyrus Z. came to buy a good dog cheap.

"All the while I was telling this to Whitaker he patted the pocket in which he kept his purse. When I had finished, he asked, 'Isn't there any way to cure him?'

"'No,' I said. 'Not unless some chicken gives him a good lickin'.'

"'Well,' he groaned, 'I guess you'll have to shoot him. He's already cost me more than I paid for him.'

"I said, 'Look here, Mr. Whitaker. If it's a question of shooting the dog to get rid of him, I'll take him and guarantee you against any responsibilities.'

"Whitaker slapped me on the knee and said, 'He's yours!'

"Right there is where I lost by being a bit of a Yank myself. If I had only thought to pay him some money and get his receipt, I'd have saved myself a lot of regrets.

"Well, I kept Rap in the yard for a few days, but as soon as I had him under control I shouldered my gun and took him afield. I was anxious to try him on game. I knew that although I might cure him of the chicken-killing by feeding him raw poultry loaded with some bitter-tasting stuff that would nauseate him, there would still be the quail-snatching.

"In no time he found a covey. And again he smashed into a point that sent little prickles up and down my spine. He held it like iron, too, while I flushed the birds and wing-tipped one. But the moment that bird started flopping on the ground, Rap broke and nailed it. And that was the situation. On healthy, wild birds he was firm as a rock; but the moment a bird started to flutter in the grass with weak or broken wings, Rap became a killer.

"One morning I was sitting on this bench, with Rap beside me. While I was wondering what to do I looked up and saw a hawk. And then my own words came back to me—'unless some chicken gives him a good lickin'.

"I made a plan right then and there. But first I wanted to have some signal for reminding Rap of a very painful experience. So I sent away and got a hawk call. I never succeeded in calling a hawk down, but I did make them answer. Rap would sit here beside me while the hawk and I talked with each other. After a while he took an interest in it. He would cock his ears and wrinkle his nose, trying to figure out what I was up to.

"When I felt that the time had come, I dug a blind out in that field and tethered a chicken near it. After the hawks got over being suspicious, one of them took the chicken. I gave them two more just to make them careless, and then Rap and I went out in the blind.

"I didn't use the call until the hawk had stooped on the decoy. But the moment I had fired and broken a wing, I blew the call with all my might. Dropping the gun, I let Rap go, and imme-

diately started after him, still blowing the call. I wanted that note to be ringing in his ears when the hawk sank its talons in his flesh. I got there in time to save Rap's eyes, but he was the worst cut-up dog I ever saw. He'd had all the flopping birds he wanted. In fact, he didn't even stay to finish the chicken. The kennel was what he pined for, and how!

"Last April at Medford history repeated itself—Lightnin' Rap was braced with Seaview Star in the Open All Age Stake. Talk about a battle of the giants!

"There was a cold raw wind, with rain that drove the quail into the heavy cover. But Rap and Star didn't let that bother them any as they matched paces down the course, darting in and out of those soggy thickets like life-guards diving through surf.

"It was 'Point, Judge!' with the gallery galloping from one spectacular find to another. I was almost crazy trying to keep track of Rap, and Star's handler looked most of the time as if he had lost his way in the woods. You never saw two more relieved men than we were when we finally brought those dogs safely into the bird field just within the time limit. For fire and dash in locating game and style in pointing, there had been little choice between them up to that moment. They were just about as nearly equal as two dogs could be.

"From the tail of my eye I saw a judge glance at his watch and nod to another judge. At that instant the two dogs were racing across the field from opposite sides, right at each other. A thick patch of weeds lay between. Just as a judge's voice called, 'Take them up!' they froze about forty feet apart.

"The judge called again. 'Flush that bird, and then take them up.'

"As I slid off my horse I had a hunch about 'that bird.' Game-farm quail had been released in the bird fields that day. And they are a problem. They just won't lie still, no matter how hard a dog cracks down on them. Where a wild bird would crouch frozen with terror at a dog's sudden approach, a domesticated quail just trots along to get out of the dog's way. So I got out my hawk call and blew it.

"Walking up behind Rap, I could see the grass move faintly. Rap was quivering, racked with temptation. For good measure I blew another low warning note. I remembered that the other handler looked at me in perplexity as he walked toward me, behind Star.

"Passing Rap's nose, I took a few quick steps, stamping the grass. Up went the quail, fluttering along about three feet off the ground and right smack at Star. It was too much for Star. With three swift bounds he nailed that bird in the air. His handler shouted at him and cursed, but it was too late. I fired my pistol. For five seconds I stood trembling, not at what Star's handler said he would do to me later but because I was so keyed up that I thought I heard Rap starting to follow Star.

"When I looked around, there the old boy stood, like a statue. He hadn't budged. Instead of snapping a leash on him, I picked him up and carried him to the dog truck. Just as I was cuddling him down in the straw, along comes Cyrus Z. and slaps me on the back.

"'Nice work, Will Hen!' he crowed. 'They gave Rap the decision on the field.'

"I said: 'Don't waste praise on me, Mr. Whitaker. It all belongs to the dog.'

"At that he sort of simpered and reached for his pocketbook. 'Well, ah—it doesn't matter. I'm not interested in Rap any longer. I sold him about five minutes ago for one thousand dollars. And here's a bonus of five dollars for you.'

"When I could get my breath back, I said: 'But Rap is not for sale. You gave him to me!'

"He gave me a reproving look. 'You must have misunderstood me, Mr. Davidson. If you will read your contract, which by the way still has a few weeks to run, you will find that the fruits of your labors, so far as dogs are concerned, are my property.' Laying the five dollars on the running-board, he turned on his heel and walked away.

"I swallowed my anger and called after him, 'Wait a minute! I'd like to ask who bought Rap.'

"Cyrus Z. paused and pressed his hands together as if in prayer, a look of heavenly bliss spreading over his face. 'The gentleman's name, I believe, is Lester Sambrook.'

"I took it out on Star's handler when he pitched into me an hour later. The last time he went down, I dragged him to his feet, apologized and gave him Whitaker's blood-money."

Will Hen glanced at his watch. "But I haven't finished with that Whitaker yet. When Lester Sambrook found that his handler couldn't control Rap, he wired me that he was sending him down here. And just as sure as quail is quail and dogs is dogs, I'm going to be riding behind Rap when he wins the National Championship at Grand Junction.

"And when Cyrus Whitaker reads in the paper that Lester Sambrook has won a \$1,500 purse with a dog that he sold for \$1,000—man, oh, man! It's going to gripe him."

GHOST BIRDS¹

*Woodcock in a snow-storm, with ruffed
grouse as an added attraction*

By COLONEL H. P. SHELDON

THE IMPRESSION is wide-spread that the inhabitants of communities in northern New England are compounded of non-volatile substances and that their emotional nerve centers, from long centuries of disuse, have become vestigial. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Yankee's heart is certainly as warm as anyone's and responds as readily to the touch of joy or woe; it is the Yankee's innate sense of dignity and decency which stops him from making any shallow public display of his emotions.

But now and then something occurs of a nature so unpredictable and unusual as to do violence to this well-tempered placidity. A few years ago the town of Tranquillity was experiencing a touch of mild hysteria over just such an unprecedented occurrence. It was occasioned by the fact that as late as the twentieth day of the month of October no one had seen so much as a wing-feather of the woodcock flight that comes down from Nova Scotia, Quebec and Maine.

It is not likely that the woodcock's defection, had it continued, would have permanently altered the course of human affairs in the township, but there was no doubting the fact that there was considerable domestic disturbance as a result of it. There were

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gatherings of quiet, serious men at the post office and at Pingree's hardware store.

A salesman traveling for an ammunition firm happened upon one of these sober groups one evening just in time to hear Squint Norton gravely telling the other men that "he'd sarched an' sarched, but seen nary a sign o' the leetle creeturs." The commercial man was so impressed by the gravity with which the news was received that he quite naturally supposed that someone's children had been lost in the woods. When he learned that woodcock and not children were the cause of concern, he laughed aloud, and thereby lost the sale of a dozen cases of duck loads to Pingree.

The Dark-Haired Lady knew a lot more than the drummer did about such things, but even she found it difficult to understand the degree of perturbation with which the Sniper viewed the situation.

"He's as restless as he was when he had the German measles," she declared to the Judge, referring to a particularly disgraceful episode in her consort's mature career. "He watches the skies as if he expected to see Elijah's chariot coming down to take him for a ride. Every morning he's out early to see how much dew has fallen on the lawn. You'd think it was all the water there is in the world."

"If it was," the Judge interjected politely, "it would be more than he'd need for drinking purposes, ma'am."

The Lady laughed. "But—how can anyone complain of such lovely weather!" she continued. "What's a little woodcock, anyhow? You're getting all the grouse you can use, aren't you?"

"That ain't just the point," the Judge declared respectfully. "Come to think of it, I don't know that I can just put it into words, either; but a bird season without woodcock in it is a good deal as if you had a new fur coat and no doodads to match it. It's grand, but it ain't completely satisfactory."

"I see," said she, nodding her dark head in perfect understanding.

There had been an excellent crop of native birds raised in the

numerous swamps and damp coverts in which the region abounds, and for a week after the season opened there had been good shooting. Then the canny, long-billed survivors had broken camp in the nighttime and gone, leaving only the dapplings of fading whitewash in the thickets and the marks of their tiny daggers in the moist earth along the edges of the alder and birch copses in the upland pastures. Since that time no gunner had so much as seen the brown and black of a rising, whistling bird—let alone taken one.

Day after golden day the warm sunlight lay level across the glowing countryside. The choke-cherries growing in the corners of the roadside fences turned from wine-red to black; the robins and flickers had assembled their battalions in the wild grapevines in readiness for departure, and the maple leaves lay spread on the sward beneath the lofty branches from which they had fallen.

At evening the smoke from the chimneys of homestead and hamlet rose in the straight, unwavering columns that are precursors of storm and tempest. But no wind or rain came, nor any violence of weather. Each day appeared set in the same amber chalice that had enclosed its glowing predecessors. And still the covers held none of the mysterious brown birds that work a charm upon upland gunners which in its potency is out of all proportion to the woodcock's modest size and Quakerish demeanor.

Then one night, after another day of quiet, warm sunlight, the snow began. It came so softly that the Sniper was unaware of the storm until he woke in the morning to a dim world of seething white flakes, which fell straight to the earth from out a windless, low and leaden sky.

"Damn it!" he complained at breakfast. "There wasn't a sign of this last night! If we'd known of it in time, we might have taken an early start and had some topnotch black-duck shootin' at the Point. Too late now, and this will all go off tomorrow."

Resigned, therefore, to a day of indoor activity, he presently retired to his big chair with pad and pencil to work on a neglected manuscript.

The Sniper was still engaged in this harmless literary endeavor when the Judge's old car came thudding into the yard about mid-way of the lonely, storm-bound afternoon. The old sportsman wore shooting clothes and boots, and was brusque and hurried of manner.

"Come on, get your rig on!" he commanded. "No time to lose!"

"There's no time at all!" exclaimed his friend. "It's an hour's drive to the Point—more'n that in this smother. We'll no more'n get the decoys out when we'll have to take 'em up again."

"We ain't going to the Point," his counselor informed him. "We're going to the Williamsville Cover after woodcock. It just happens that I remember a season like this one, and a day like this one, back in 1901. Old Bill Ward, who shot for the market, killed fifteen pairs of woodcock that day, and I got a fair bag myself," he added modestly. "We were the only ones to go out—nobody else ever thought of woodcock in a snow-storm. They won't think of 'em today; but if the birds are coming at all, they'll be here and lying in close alder cover. You'll see!"

The Sniper was openly skeptical, but he put away his pad and rose obediently. "I don't believe a word of it," said he. "In all the years I've known you, I can't recall a single time when you could remember anything of any immediate or possible use. You remembered the road to Biddy's Knob all right last deer season, but you couldn't remember which way to turn when we got there. In consequence, dawn found us nine miles away in the streets of the ancient village of Skenesboro—and that's a hell of a place to look for a deer runway. You always remember to put the lunch in the car, too, and half the time it's the wrong car, and we go hungry. I'd be a fool to trust you to remember anything worth while. I'd also be a fool to expect to shoot woodcock in a blizzard; so I don't expect it. But I'll go, because anything's better than this."

Warmed by days of sunshine, the earth dissolved the first snow easily, but not quite as rapidly as the deluge of flakes came down, so that only an inch or two of the soft wet stuff was under their

boots as the two gunners crossed Brigg's pasture and entered the edge of the great stretch of black alders that filled the valley beyond. It was a world curiously hushed in which they found themselves. None of the familiar sounds from highway and farmstead penetrated the shifting, sliding curtain of snow flakes.

All nature seemed in a mood to endure patiently the unseasonable discomfort without audible protest, as a philosophical wild-fowler turns up his collar, bows his head, and prepares to survive the miseries and inclemencies that so often attend upon his uncharitable recreation. The dank, wet stems of the alders made grotesque patterns in the opacity of the falling snow, which screened the spots of color where some bright-foliaged shrub or clump of wild aster wore its gay holiday dress in defiance of the disapproval of the bedraggled landscape.

"There ain't a woodcock in there," declared the Sniper positively. "Look at it! But it's a pretty sight, just the same, and the fire will feel mighty comfortable when we get back to it after sloshing around in this mess for an hour or two."

The Judge had lost some of his earlier assurance, even though he wouldn't admit it. After all, it was a long way back to that day in 1901 with Old Bill Ward, and it might be that it just hadn't snowed quite so hard on that occasion as he thought it had. But he dropped a couple of loads of g's into his old double, drew the hammers back and stepped in among the stems.

"Come on!" he ordered.

The other did as he was bade. There was a ghostly atmosphere about the environment that the Sniper never forgot afterward. A thin vapor rose from the earth and mingled with the flakes, and in it the dark figure of the Judge, thirty paces distant, became vague, distorted and grotesque. He might have been one of Rip Van Winkle's Little Men of the Kaatskills finding his way back to the glen above the Hudson through the murk that enshrouded the hills.

"If he was one of 'em," thought the Sniper, "I'd ask him for a draft from his wicked flagon. I'm wet to the waist already and colder than a spring-house frog. This stuff is a mite too cold to be

water and not quite cold enough to be called snow. And as for woodcock——”

Something brown and spectral rose abruptly in front of his face and went darting through the mist and snow. The Sniper's gun came up, and its quick report sounded dull in the smothering whiteness.

The Judge called anxiously. “Get one?”

“I shot at one—or the ghost of one,” was the astonished reply as the Sniper went forward to find that it was no spirit bird that had drawn his fire, but a fat brown and black hen woodcock lying in the snow beyond the alders from which she had sprung.

Examination disclosed that the bird had been resting on a spot of bare, wet ground no larger in area than a man's hand, where the outcurving root of a sapling gave protection from the snow. As the gunner shook the moisture from the bird's plumage the flat pop of the Judge's gun came to his ears, to be followed instantly by another, and that in turn by his friend's calm announcement that he “believed he had a pair of 'em down and might need help to find 'em.”

This aid the Sniper cheerfully gave. While the Judge stood fast at the spot from which he had fired and pointed first in one direction and then in another his companion found and gathered both birds.

They were following the opposite slopes of a shallow fold of the ground. A trickle of water from a hidden spring made a black ribbon among the alder roots on its way to join a more imposing stream at the foot of the pasture, two hundred yards distant. Their custom, when they hunted this cover, was to follow the trickle to the main stream, then cross over a low rise and beat back along another wandering thread of moisture that so closely resembled its neighbor as to be indistinguishable except to those few bird hunters and farmer boys who wandered through the thickets in search of game or straying cattle.

The light from the lowering sky lessened as the two friends progressed, but the pallid glow of the new-fallen snow gave a flat and toneless illumination to the eerie scene. The muzzles of the

Judge's gun showed an orange tongue of flame as he fired at another twittering apparition that fluttered away into the obscurity. The birds were everywhere about them, springing from alder root and from beneath the snow-covered castles of the chimney-top. Many there were that went away unseen in the dusk of the snow, their immediate presence and instant departure indicated only by the quick whistle and the rustle of brown bent wings.

Two grouse that had been brooding over the question of where to go for supper in such disagreeable weather went out from beneath a small pine with a double roll of winged thunder and a mighty swirl of flakes. For all his years in these uplands and the thousands of empty cartridge cases he had left to molder in thickets of birch and pine, in old apple orchards and beside old vine-covered walls, the Sniper had never found the proper mental sedative to counteract the exquisite jerk that the roar of a grouse gives to the nerves of the man who is gunning for the bold, resourceful bird. Nature taught that trick to the partridge in order to encourage bad handling of bird guns, and it annually saves many a ruff.

The uproar sounded unusually loud and demoralizing in the dimness and silence, but the muzzles of the little 20-bore went racing with the last bird, passed it and drove a load of shot into the smother. Unable to see the result, the gunner knew somehow that the lead had gone true. This was promptly verified by a solid thump as the big bird came down across the little stream, and then the listener heard the grouse beat a farewell to the familiar coverts with its failing wings against the dappled snow.

"Well, old fellow, you didn't make it that time, did you?" said the gunner softly as he gathered the bird and decently arranged the rumpled satiny feathers. "But you bore yourself well and nobly, and maybe it's a better way than to have a fox grab you, or a big owl snatch your shirt off some night when you're sound asleep in a hemlock tree."

With this honest tribute to a fallen friend, he slipped the dead bird into the pocket of his wet jacket and went onward.

The brook, when they reached it, was a black leaden stream;

its dull surface took the falling flakes and quenched them like sparks. The sluggish roll of a spawning trout added no life to the scene, but only served to draw attention to the metamorphosis of a brook that only yesterday was gay in the amber sunlight, and now, beneath the sinister spell of the weather, lay dark and gloomy as if it were a tributary of the Styx.

The friends stood for a long minute during which the stream sounded never a gurgle, and the only voice they heard was the sibilant hiss of the falling snow.

"We might be the last two people alive," remarked the Judge, who had a fine strain of poetical imagination in him that often astonished people who knew him less well than did the Sniper. "This scene makes me think of that part in the death of King Arthur—the last great battle in the fog by the sea, when only he and Sir Belvedere remain alive and the mist and the frost come down upon the field."

"I know," said his friend. Then he shivered and turned his thoughts to more practical matters. "How many birds have you got?"

"Three," said the Judge.

"Well, I've got three too, and my partridge, and I move you that we start back and pick up one more woodcock apiece and clear out for home, fire and supper. When I shivered just then, it was for three reasons: one, I'm scared of the hobgoblins you conjured up; two, I'm wet and damnably cold; and three, I've never seen so many timberdoodles in one piece of cover in my whole life. Whoever heard of shooting woodcock in a snow-storm?"

The Judge had moved away, and already the outlines of his solid, familiar figure were wreathed and outlandishly distorted by the fog and snow, so that he resembled nothing that ever walked on earth, but his voice came back warm and human—strong and friendly, with just a trace of kindly malice in it.

"I did," said he, "and I remembered it."

SHARKS WON'T BOTHER YOU¹

Not if they can't get at you

By DAVID M. NEWELL

DURING the past fifteen or twenty years I have caught, killed and otherwise hampered the activities of some several hundred sharks of various sizes, shapes and dispositions. This should make me an authority on the subject. Personally, I don't think it does, but I'm going to write a shark story anyhow.

Old Sam Hunley had one experience with a shark, and he tells a shark story; so why shouldn't I? Sam is so black that charcoal leaves a white mark on him, and he has been with the family for forty-three years, which entitles him to a good deal of latitude in any story. I got my first impressions of sharks from Sam's story, as well as a general idea of how to do a little embellishing of my own.

"Dis shark was one of dem big ol' hammernose sharks," says Sam. "I wasn't studyin' him at all, but us come to close quarters anyhow. I was cookin' on a big boat for a bunch of white folks fishin' down in de Gulf, an' one day everybody went out in de little skiff-boats to fish all day. I washed up all de breakfast dishes an' straightened up de boat. Den I taken a little boat an' went out to do a little prowlin' myself. I'd done seen a heap of dese ol' big pompouses, playin' around, an' I taken my little ol' rifle to see could I shoot one.

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"Well, I couldn't get to see no pompouses; so I eased up in a little shallow bay to find out what was causin' so much ruckus. Dat's where dis ol' hammernose come in. He was catchin' mullets, an' he sure was havin' him a time. Back an' to he'd dash, knockin' mullets ten feet high. His big fin was stickin' dat high out'n de water, an' I decided to try him a time wid my little rifle. Boy, I wadded it to dat big scoun'el! Den business picked up. He didn't like de feel of dat bullet, an' he started to leave. But de tide had done fell till he was hemmed in.

"You ever set in a bathtub an' lean back too quick, so dat de water slosh out over de tub? Dat's what happened wid dat ol' hammernose. He seen he was hemmed up in dat bay, an' dere was a sand-bar stickin' up two feet out'n de water betwixt him an' de Gulf where he wanted to go. What did he do? Shucks! He started gwine roun' an' roun' in dat bay, shovin' de water ahead of him wid his hammer. He got all de water gwine wid him—jes' like you can do in a bathtub. Den he started for dat sand-bar; an' gen'lmens, he taken de water wid him! Jes' as much water as he seen he needed—dat's jes' how much he taken wid him! When he crossed dat sand-bar, de water was three feet deep, an' after he'd done passed over, dere was de sand-bar stickin' out high an' dry. Shucks! Don't tell me. I seen dat wid my own eyes!"

I've seen a few things with my own eyes, too, since Sam told me about old hammernose, and the more I know about sharks the less I know. For instance, there's the old question as to whether they will or they won't. I feel a good deal like Ben Seale felt one day down in Jess Tucker's store. A bunch of the tarpon guides was talking sharks, and Ben listened as long as he could.

Finally he grunted: "You fellers make me tired. You talk about shovelnose sharks and hammerhead sharks and leopard sharks and sand sharks and mackerel sharks and mullet sharks. You say one is plumb dangerous and another one is harmless. What I want to know is, how in the deuce does a shark know what kind of a shark he's supposed to be!"

That's what I'd like to know. I am firmly convinced that most sharks are not dangerous to man under ordinary conditions, but

who am I to say what a shark might consider to be extraordinary conditions? In other words, I just hate to let my legs down in the deep salt, especially offshore in the Gulf during the tarpon run. I'll tell you why.

Mac was a friend of mine. He had never caught a tarpon, and he was the most eager fisherman I ever saw.

"I'm going to have one of those big shiny babies mounted for my den if it's the last thing I do," he said that morning as we plowed our way out through Casey's Pass. "I'll get him if I have to dive overboard and catch him with my bare hands."

"You better stay out of that water," growled Hilton Rawls, our guide. "There's two or three of the biggest sharks I ever saw, livin' on them fish. I wouldn't get into that water for a gold monkey with diamond eyes."

"Sharks won't bother you," said Mac.

"You're darn right they won't bother me," grunted Hilton. "I stay in the boat. I'm talkin' about you."

Mac laughed, and we began to rig our tackle, for we had sighted fish—hundreds of them, rolling and splashing in the early morning sun. As we approached the school we were treated to a sight which I'll never forget. The fish suddenly became panicky. They milled around on top of the water in close formation, each one apparently trying to get into the middle of the school. Then we understood! Cruising deep around the edge of the school was a great brown-purple shadow.

"Boy, what a shark!" exclaimed Hilton, shutting off his motor. "Let's watch an' see what he does."

We didn't have long to wait. The giant hammerhead suddenly rose toward the surface in a mighty rush, slashing into the school of tarpon in a surge of foam and spray. He missed and turned. A fear-crazed fish left the school, and the big shark took after him. With our own eyes we watched that shark run down and catch that tarpon after a 200- or 300-yard chase!

Now, I am not claiming that a shark can outswim a tarpon. All I say is that we saw this shark run down and catch a perfectly healthy, free tarpon which had not been slowed or weakened by

a line. The only explanation I can give is that the tarpon lost its head through fear, and instead of going deep in an attempt to escape its pursuer it stayed on top, wasting its strength in a series of wild, crazy leaps. A dozen or more times it jumped, but finally the big shark was waiting underneath. There was a flurry of spray, a dark patch in the water, and that was all.

"Whew!" said Mac. "I guess I'll stay in the boat."

"You tell 'em," grinned Hilton.

"How big was that tarpon?" asked Mac.

"About a hundred pounds," I said.

"And I only weigh one forty," breathed Mac.

"Yeah," added Hilton. "An' you ain't got no hard scales on you, either!"

It was half an hour before the fish settled down and began to feed. During this time we saw no more sharks, and Mac was just starting to say something about the sun being pretty hot when his cork disappeared with a loud plop.

"Stick him, Mr. Mac!" shouted Hilton, starting his motor.

Mac struck hard, and the fun was on. His fish was not a very large one—110 or 115 pounds—but it was a very slim-built and active fish, and Mac was having the time of his life. I had never seen a fish make higher, more furious jumps, and just as I was leaning back to enjoy the show Hilton went into a string of language known only to boat captains. The big shark was after Mac's fish! Don't ever let anyone tell you that a shark has to turn over on its back or side to strike. That shark just rolled up and took Mac's fish as you would inhale a spoonful of oatmeal.

Mac had a wall-eyed fit. "What'll I do?" he shrieked, turning to Hilton.

"You tell me," barked our guide. "Ain't nothin' you can do. That old hammerhead is doin' all the doin' that's to be done."

About this time Mac's line went slack.

"All over," said Hilton. "Reel in, an' we'll rig up a new bait."

When Mac attempted to reel, the rod bent to a heavy weight. As he pumped, the tarpon came to the surface on its side, mashed and mutilated.

"Turned it loose," I said. "Just playing with it—that's all he was doing."

"There he comes again!" howled Hilton. "Pump hard, Mr. Mac, an' maybe we can keep it away from him."

Mac pumped valiantly, but he didn't have a chance. The big shark rolled lazily up and took the tarpon again, as easily as a bass would take a dying minnow.

"All over," grunted Hilton again.

But he was wrong. A second time the tarpon floated to the surface, now just a bloody mess. By this time there were not over fifty yards of line out, and Mac was pumping and reeling for all he was worth.

"Maybe I can save a scale, anyhow," he groaned. "Such lousy luck!"

But the excitement was not over. When the dead fish was little more than twenty feet from the boat, a huge shadow appeared out of the clear green depths. Hilton grabbed the gaff and shouted.

"Keep him comin'. We'll take him away from the big devil!"

The only other weapon in sight was a 14-foot poling oar, made of stout hickory, and I grabbed that. Just as Hilton gaffed the remains of the tarpon the huge hammerhead made a rush. I raised the heavy oar and brought it down on the shark's head with all my strength, Mac fell over backward in the boat, and Hilton jerked the tarpon out of the water and on to the stern deck. The shark was coming too fast to turn, and he hit the boat a terrific wallop, paying no more attention to my blow than Tony Galento would pay to a baby's slap.

"Look out!" squalled Hilton. "He's comin' back!"

And back he came, lying alongside, the whole evil length of him—fully three quarters as long as our 26-foot power boat. There he lay, trying in vain to raise his ugly head out of the water high enough to get the tarpon's tail in his mouth. His dorsal fin stuck up above the level of our gunwale. Hilton grabbed a heavy machine hammer from the top of his motor cover. Hilton Rawls is a powerful man, and what he did to that shark with his machine hammer would have killed a bull elephant. He rested one hand on the

dorsal fin, and he wielded the hammer with every ounce of his strength.

In the meantime I was giving the old boy a facial massage with the butt end of the poling oar. I would raise the oar as high as I could, lunging down with all the hatred of fifteen years' experience with sharks. The oar bounced back as it would from a heavy truck tire, and there was seemingly no give whatever to the shark's body. I don't believe he felt it! He just lay there and tried to take Mac's poor tarpon off the boat. Mac was crazy.

"Where's a gun?" he shouted, waving his arms frantically.

"Ain't got one," puffed Hilton between hammer blows.

"Where's a harpoon?" howled Mac. "Where's something?"

"Ain't got nothin'," answered Hilton, leaning farther over the gunwale. "George, my brother, has a harpoon in his boat inshore there. See if you can signal him."

I took off my shirt and tied it to the end of the poling oar and waved it nobly, but George did not see it.

Finally the big shark became discouraged. He was fully 4 feet across the hammers, and he couldn't get his mouth close enough to the boat to get hold of the tarpon's tail. When he turned head on, his mouth was so far back underneath that he couldn't do any better. So he quit in disgust. I like to think that my manly efforts with the poling oar had something to do with it, but I doubt it. At any rate, the shark gave up and disappeared in the depths.

"Whew!" panted Mac, who hadn't been doing anything but yell. "I'm sure glad he's gone."

Hilton looked at him contemptuously.

"He ain't gone. Watch."

He took his knife and slashed the mutilated carcass of the tarpon, so that blood and scales poured into the water. As the dark stain settled we watched eagerly. Suddenly our foe reappeared, cutting back and forth through the blood trail with all the eagerness of a hound on a hot scent.

"What'll we do?" yelled Mac.

"I'll tell you what we'll do," I said. "We'll catch him—that's what we'll do."

Hilton looked at me incredulously.

"How much gas have we got?" I asked.

"A full tank."

"O.K. This is a fast boat, and it's still morning. We'll hook that baby on the heaviest tackle we have aboard, and we'll stay with him. I'll take him for thirty minutes, Mac will take him for the next thirty minutes, and you take him for thirty minutes. We won't let him rest."

"He won't let us rest! Man, that's a grown shark! He'll go a thousand or better, an' we ain't got nothin' but tarpon tackle."

"Let's try him!" beamed Mac. "After all, I came out here to fish."

"Grab your hats," grunted Hilton. "Here we go."

While he rigged up our heaviest rod I took the knife and cut about a 40-pound slab of meat off the tarpon's side. We slipped the hook through the skin, and I held the leader over the side of the boat. For several seconds the big shark did not see it. Then he rose very leisurely and swallowed the bait. I let him have it until I knew that it was well on its way, and then set the hook. Instantly the giant hammerhead turned out to sea.

"Here we go," grinned Hilton, starting the motor. "But remember I got a wife and babies, and they need grocery money on Saturday night."

"It's only Wednesday," screeched Mac. "Give him the works, Dave!"

I gave him all the rod would stand without checking anything but an old kink in my back. Then suddenly the line went slack. I reeled in, and Hilton picked the trailing line out of the water.

"Cut, by gosh!" he exclaimed. "There was a six-foot wire leader and a four-foot double loop. This line is cut about the middle of the double loop. That means that this shark's belly is eight feet from his mouth. That's a fur piece."

"Let's not fool with him any more," said Mac. "We didn't want him anyhow."

We all agreed that we didn't want him anyhow, and headed back inshore to look for the tarpon.

"Do you think that that shark would have attacked a man?" queried Mac. "Do you think he would have hit one of us if we had fallen overboard?"

"It'd be just like a yearlin' trout an' a house-fly," grunted Hilton.

That's what I think. What do you think?

ON THE TRAIL OF THE MOUNTAIN GORILLA¹

*Hunting the greatest of the apes in bamboo
jungles ten thousand feet above the sea*

By KENNETH CARR

FOR MANY YEARS I had shot elephants for a living, and during my hunting had heard many strange tales from the natives about gorillas. It was said they were a species of wild men who carried clubs; also, that one would occasionally raid a native village and take away a buxom black damsel for a wife.

Gorillas are found only in Africa, and in two main localities: the Cameroons on the west coast, and a few scattered areas in the eastern Belgian Congo. Those in the latter district were discovered in 1903 and are known as the mountain gorillas. They frequent the mountains of the Birunga Volcano area, around Lake Kivu, and are generally found at high altitudes, ranging from 6,000 to 10,000 feet. They even have feeding grounds in the higher zones.

As the mountain gorillas are protected, the only chance of shooting one is when a specimen is wanted for some museum. It was on such a quest that I first hunted them on the Birunga Volcanoes. In this same area Carl Akeley had previously collected the gorilla group which is now in the African Hall of the American Museum of Natural History in New York.

When at last I set off on safari to the gorilla country, I was

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thrilled with excitement. As I had never even seen a stuffed specimen, I had only my imagination to draw on, based on the pictures and articles I had come across from time to time—great hairy bodies, waddling along on two legs, with ugly faces and fierce glaring eyes peering at you from some dense thicket, their yellow teeth bared in angry snarls.

I figured that a gorilla would not be as formidable as an elephant, because its human-like throat and chest would provide easy targets; and also, soft-nosed bullets could be used. I took along my .350. I have always used a .350 since I started hunting big game in 1912, and I can't speak too highly of its death-dealing qualities.

At last I came in sight of the Birunga Volcanoes. I had crossed a beautiful lake called Bunonyi and then climbed up a high escarpment, and was camped for the night on its summit at an altitude of 8,000 feet. The Birunga Volcanoes consist of eight mighty cones covered with dense vegetation, but only two of them were active.

I won't try to describe that view from Behungi. I could not picture in words its wonderful beauty and grandeur. It is one of those few places that a man can visit again and again, and each time like it better than the last.

I made my first hunting camp on the slope of an extinct volcano. That site was just over 10,000 feet high up in the bamboo zone. It was bitterly cold and damp up there at times, especially at night, when a cold mist set in from the mountains.

At night I put on woolen underclothes and had several blankets covering me, but even then I frequently felt the cold. There was, however, plenty of firewood, and we always had a roaring camp fire going. My carriers were Banyruanda, who wear only skins and are very hardy. Maybe the fact that they never seem to wash helps to keep out the cold.

I also had some Batwa guides. These are the pygmies that hunt in the mountains. A short time previously, the Government had imposed a hut tax upon them, but to avoid payment they ran away and hid in the mountains. These pygmies are not quite as

short as the pygmies in the Ituri Forest in the Congo, but they closely resemble them. They have flat, broad noses like all the pygmy tribes. They live like the Ituri pygmies, entirely by hunting game with bows and arrows and spears. They are always on the trail, and whatever food they require besides meat they get by trading meat for it. They make fire with fire sticks.

While I was getting the camp fixed up the Batwas went out to look for gorillas—at least that's what they said. Twice they reported that they hadn't seen any signs. I got suspicious; so I had a look at their feet and legs. You can always tell in that way whether a native has done much walking in the bush. I decided they had not, and concluded they were just hanging around outside the camp, smoking their pipes instead of looking for gorillas.

Very early next day I set off with my Muganda tracker, Bezilondere, and some pygmy guides. Bezilondere had been with me for years. He was a wonderful tracker and a stout-hearted cheery fellow, about six feet tall and very strong. I have never known Bezilondere to fail to raise a smile even under the most trying circumstances, and that's something!

After leaving camp we ran into some pretty thick bush. In it we came across recent buffalo tracks. I followed them up, as I wanted to see what the Birunga Volcano buffaloes were like, but it was thick undergrowth, and they crashed off before I could see them. A little later we suddenly came across strange tracks.

While Bezilondere and I were examining the tracks we were startled by the most strange and deafening roar I had ever heard. At first I thought it was an angry cow elephant, and yet it didn't sound quite the same. Then a little pygmy sidled up to me and whispered, "Ngagi [Gorilla]!"

The gorillas uttered several more horrible cries as I cautiously followed them through the dense bush. In places they went through tunnels in the tangled bamboos and thick vegetation. Often I had to crawl along, dragging my rifle after me, hoping for the best. Those crafty gorillas would scream at us and then go on again, but they never charged, only retreated higher and higher up the mountain.

Eventually I tried to work around them, and so get up above them. I quickly made a wide detour, but again had no luck. Later on, as it was nearly sundown, I went straight for them, determined to see them at any cost, but on my approach they let out a volley of roars and ran away. All I saw that day was the shaking of the bamboos as the gorillas picked off the young shoots, and occasionally I heard the strange noises they made. They also made a rumbling sound, not as loud as elephants do, but still a definite rumble.

Gorillas eat enormous quantities of green food, and the gases in their stomachs, no doubt, cause that rumble. We got back to camp long after sundown, very tired and disgusted. As Bezilon-dere said, "Leo mbya sana [Today has been a very bad day]."

My next hunt was more successful. I came on gorillas again in very thick bush. This time I decided to wait and not attempt to follow them. They became inquisitive. First one old male would roar and shake the vegetation. Naturally I would be on the alert, expecting a charge, my rifle ready for instant use. Then another male would roar, pretending to charge, and thus give his mate a chance to creep nearer while my attention was being occupied by the other one.

As far as I could make out, there were three old male gorillas. If they had only had the sense to charge me simultaneously, I wouldn't have had a chance, because the bush was thick and the range short. I couldn't have shot more than one before the others would have been upon me, but they didn't charge. I think it was just curiosity that urged them to come closer. I got very excited waiting to see what a gorilla really looked like.

At last I was rewarded. Suddenly the tangled undergrowth was pulled aside, and there, only a few feet away, was a great shaggy head and a pair of fierce eyes glaring into mine. I fired below that terrible face. It disappeared, and there was a tremendous crashing in the thick undergrowth as the gorillas fled. None of them attempted to avenge their comrade. Was he dead?

I waited until the sound of the fleeing gorillas had died away, and then cautiously investigated. I found his great hairy body

lying face downward—he was dead, all right. I realized then how huge gorillas are. A big male may weigh 500 pounds and measure 64 inches around the chest. I had not shot him in the brain because the skulls must be perfect for museum specimens.

With the help of Bezilondere and the pygmies, we turned the huge animal over and had a good look at him. A gorilla is covered with long black hair, but his chest is bare, and the hair on the back of old males is short and gray. Like many wild animals, they have a peculiar odor of their own. This odor is strong in places that they have recently occupied.

In another area I investigated several accounts of natives being attacked by gorillas, and in all cases they had grasped their victims with their huge hands and torn out pieces of flesh with their big canine teeth. They are so strong that they could easily tear a man to pieces. Natives are generally attacked while out alone. A man walking alone in the bush will sometimes come face to face with a gorilla, or with several.

At such close quarters a human being does not have a chance to protect himself or run away when attacked. This also applies to most dangerous African game. An animal at close quarters can use the weapons nature gave him, while at a short distance away they are useless. All game animals know this and act accordingly. Most creatures seem to know that man's weapons—his rifle, spear, or arrow—are effective at a distance.

Gorillas are afraid of several natives armed with spears or bows and arrows. Under such circumstances the natives easily get the best of it. As a rule, the gorillas go about in bands of various numbers, but occasionally I have come across two together, and on one occasion an old male by himself.

Early one morning, when I was out with Bezilondere and some pygmies, I struck the trail of a lone gorilla. He had been there the previous afternoon. We followed his spoor quickly, as we expected to find first where he had slept, and then later to catch up with him. We were very much surprised when, after tracking him for about an hour, there was a roar just ahead as he dashed

off. The undergrowth was too thick to catch even a glimpse of him.

I followed cautiously, making as little noise as possible, but he was always on the alert, and I could never get close to him, as he would always hear me and run on ahead. This happened several times, and each time he would go farther before resting. I finally had to give up the chase. We were all wondering why we had come on him so suddenly when we were following what we believed was his yesterday's spoor; so we went back to investigate. We found that he had turned off the game track he was following to sleep close by, up against the trunk of a big tree. In the morning he had continued along the same game track.

Gorillas often build nest-like platforms of branches in the trees. These are generally occupied by the females and young, while the old males sleep below. They often make a hollow near the trunk of a tree and then sleep with their backs against the trunk. Gorillas frequently walk about on two legs like human beings, but in the thick bush and when running they always go on all fours, as they cannot travel quickly upright.

One day I had a very fine view of gorillas walking about on two legs. This was up on the saddle between two mountains called Mikeno and Karassimbi, which are extinct volcanoes near Lake Kivu. As usual, I had Bezilondere and some pygmies with me. I was camping on the saddle between the mountains, and was out looking for gorillas. Suddenly I saw a band of them feeding across a small ravine, a short distance away. We concealed ourselves and watched them. Across this ravine there was a fallen tree.

The gorillas, with two old gray-backed males in the rear, began to walk over the fallen tree in single file, to feed on my side of the ravine. It was very interesting watching them as they all walked on two legs. They came quite close to where we were concealed. The young ones played about and seemed to enjoy themselves immensely, while the older ones waddled around, picking and eating the stalks of a wild plant of which they were very fond.

After watching the gorillas for some time, I decided to shoot the biggest of the old gray-backed males, who was feeding a little apart from the others. I fired, and he fell and was hidden in the undergrowth, so that the other gorillas heard only the shot. They all looked around, trying to locate the noise, but we kept quiet and they couldn't see us. At last they decided that there was danger about; so they walked back single file over the fallen tree. The remaining old gray-backed male stayed behind, still trying to locate the danger. Bezilondere couldn't understand why I didn't shoot him, and whispered, "Bwana, lwaki tobuka [Master, why don't you shoot]?"

I explained that I needed only the one specimen; so he asked me if he might talk to the gorilla. He was quite a wag, this Bezilondere. I agreed, and we all stood up and Bezilondere spoke to him in his best Luganda. Wasn't that old gorilla furious! He just stood there and bellowed and made faces at us, showing his teeth all the while, but never attempting to charge, which pleased me, as I didn't want to shoot the old fellow.

He finally realized, I suppose, that it might be a bit dangerous to stay too long, because he waddled off to join his companions. But he tried to go too fast on two legs, and to maintain his balance he grasped any support in the way of odd bamboos that happened to be within his reach. As he went he turned around and grimaced at us over his shoulder. I don't think he appreciated our laughter.

In 1938, I paid a visit to the gorilla area at the southwest end of Lake Kivu. I camped near a quinine plantation, and my intention was to try to take photographs of the gorillas. They were strictly protected, and I had no desire to shoot one. A small pygmy tribe lived there, whose chief was called Kashula. He was a quaint old pygmy with a beard. I asked him to give me two or three of his best trackers, so that I could creep up to the gorillas and photograph them.

When the chief heard that I did not have permission to shoot a gorilla, he refused, and insisted on coming with all his men armed with spears. His argument was that, if the gorillas charged

and I wasn't prepared to shoot them, two or three pygmies weren't sufficient protection. He also pointed out that the gorillas were more likely to be nasty if they saw only two or three pygmies and myself than they would be at seeing a whole crowd of spearmen. He was, of course, right; so I had to take Kashula and his crowd along with me.

I made three attempts to get photographs, but each time the gorillas heard us, and the females and young would run away, leaving the old males behind, just as they had done on Sabinio. Kashula's pygmies certainly knew their job. When the gorillas were in close range, they would just stand shoulder to shoulder with their long spears raised, forming a line of threatening steel. If the gorillas had charged, they would have been riddled with spears.

As the light was bad, making photography impossible, and the pygmies seemed bent on taunting the gorillas, I realized that sooner or later the gorillas would get too close, and it would be an excuse for those spears to be thrown; so I gave it up as a bad job. With Kashula and his crowd of spearmen I wasn't in any danger, but the gorillas were.

Hunting mountain gorillas is really strenuous work. It means climbing up and down ravines and sometimes the mountainside. The hunter is generally working his way through matted vegetation, often at a high altitude in cold, wet weather. In the tunnels of tangled bamboo and undergrowth, a hunter wouldn't have much chance if the gorillas charged. He would have to fire from his hip, and the chances are that he would succeed only in wounding one. In occasional patches where the country is more or less open, a gorilla's unprotected throat and chest make him an easy target.

After Carl Akeley collected the specimens for his gorilla group in the American Museum he studied their habits and tried to learn their crude language. The Belgian Government, following his wishes and suggestions, made this area into a gorilla sanctuary. Today it is called the "Parc Albert National."

While carrying on his research work in the jungle, Carl Akeley

died and was buried on the saddle between Mikenno and Karasimbi, not far away from where I saw the gorillas cross the fallen tree. Maybe that same band of gorillas sometimes wanders by his grave, little knowing that beneath the green moss and wildflowers lies the man who did so much to give them their present protection.

“HOW TO”¹

The author has the temerity to attack Field and Stream's practical articles in a humorous vein

By RICHARD WARREN HATCH

IT WAS a cold day, very cold. I was shooting at high-flying ducks with a .22 rifle, aiming so as to hit each bird in the eye. I had just brought down seven in six shots, having lined up a couple that were flying eye to eye, so to speak, when a hunter from a nearby stand about two miles away came over and questioned me.

He first asked my name. I told him. “Is it true,” he asked, “that you are the greatest shot in the East?”

Caught in the act, I had to admit it. “Yes,” I said, “and in the West also.”

“How do you do it?” he wanted to know.

“That is the sort of secret revealed only in *Field and Stream's* practical articles,” I replied pretty briskly, and turned the man loose with a brace of ducks as a gift.

But that little meeting caused me to think—something I rarely do—and *Field and Stream* was so anxious to get my secret that the editors agreed to publish my practical article if I would pay them a thousand dollars and agree to make good any loss in circulation resulting from it. Here, then, is one of the most as-

¹Copyright, 1926, by Richard Warren Hatch.

tounding articles it has been the privilege of any sporting magazine to publish.

Now, you know in the early days of the hunting season there is about as much swearing as there is shooting. Hunters miss because the poor souls haven't cuddled their old fowling-pieces since the close of the season before, unless they are wickedly addicted to drilling holes in tom cats that respond vocally to the urges of each season.

So I developed a systematic plan of summer shooting, and it is to that my wonderful success is due. I gave up clay pigeons; I ceased tormenting the tin cans in rural dump heaps and massacring old glassware. I sought live game, wild animals!

Consider the rat. He is small, very wise, and quicker and meaner than a woman at a bargain counter. He dwells in all sorts of outbuildings. You must wait for him—wait with rare patience and motionless silence. Just pretend you are waiting for a deer or a black bear. Use a .22 repeater and see how easy it is to hit one of those scurrying devils in a shady barn. Watch the hole. Don't be afraid. Face the rat bravely when he appears, and aim at his eyes. You will develop nicety of sight alignment, judgment, gentleness on the trigger.

Try a pistol if you want. I knew one man who used a .38, shooting rats from his bedroom window as they ran between two henhouses in his yard. I couldn't have hit the houses. But I tried a shotgun once for rats. It was quite fatal but poor practice, although it did save me the trouble of removing the victims. In fact, I couldn't have, anyway, for I had no vacuum cleaner with me at the time.

Of course, rat shooting is dangerous, but it does not develop skill in stalking and you will want to work that into your summer shooting. Seek, therefore, the wily woodchuck, who buries his innocent face in your bean patch. He can see around corners, through stone walls and buildings.

Why, I once crept on my hands and knees across an acre of stones to a stone wall, because I knew there was a chuck in our garden on the other side. I scraped all the skin off my shins and

the waterproof finish out of a pair of pants. I was dirtier than an Iowa hog. Just as I poked my solid dome over the wall, the old gray chuck I was stalking raised his kindly countenance from the other side. Near—I could almost see the veins in his whiskers.

He might just as well have been a tiger. I was terrified. And that chuck—the way he got off that wall and out of sight was a caution! It was a beautiful display of speed, but he needlessly rolled half the stone wall on top of me. I was licked.

If you are too lazy to stalk the noble woodchuck, just unlimber your good deer gun, something about the size of the .30-06. At about two hundred yards friend chuck looks about the size of a flea. He eats busily then sits up to enjoy the scenery and clean his teeth.

The simple brutes often develop from this exercise a regular telescopic eye. They seem to see me before I see them and I can't figure out whether it's because I'm bigger or because I'm dumber.

Anyway, learn to hit old chuck at a few hundred yards and you won't miss a moose when you get a chance to bag one. Goodness knows, a man who can hit a woodchuck should be able to bust a moose.

Don't bring your dead summer game home. I once was caught bringing home a chuck for my dog, when a real hunter accosted me. "Huh! Shooting woodchucks!" he exclaimed. Contempt was in his tone and scorn showed from his eyes.

"Not at all," I replied. "This is a brown bear."

"As near as you will ever get to one," he sneered. "You'd be good at shooting billboards if you had a good scatter gun."

But, by the way, you can eat summer game if you want to. Not rats necessarily, but chucks. Farmers eat them, they say. And as a Maine guide once told me, "You take a chuck and parboil him, then fry him in plenty of butter, and boy, I'd just as soon have chicken!" So would I.

Now the last bit of practical summer shooting is the best, the crow. If you take a .22 for him, he's easy, but try to get within shotgun range and you've got a little job of stalking on your

hands that will train you to catch anything from a rainbow trout to a giraffe.

He's a bobbing, hopping, insulting devil. He's wiser than a chorus girl and shyer than a village maiden. He'll give you all varieties of pretty shots—through, over and under brush, wires and all manner of junk piles.

The crow just loves to let you crawl through a swamp or horse-briar patch and then, just as you get in range, fly off, saying things which aren't even fit to think. If he seems to be alone, he always has a couple of friends watching you all the time. If you haven't your gun with you, he'll get as near as he can and thumb his nose at you.

I'm a great hunter of crows and I can tell you that in order to be one you must be quick, invisible, good-natured and a born fool.

But I've about given up hunting them with a shotgun. One day I crawled about two hundred yards up a spring-fed brook to get two crows. When they looked my way, I practically lay in that brook and let the ice water flow gently over me. When I got ready to bail out my gun and go into action, the two fiends gave me a very coarse laugh and left me sitting in the stream, with nothing to do except drown myself. That's what I should have done.

But take up shooting the crow with a long-range rifle. I mean shooting at him. When I do it, I mow down trees and branches, but as far as killing crows goes it's about as fatal as throwing pillows at an elephant.

If you hit a crow at a couple of hundred yards, put away your rifle and retire. Any man with that kind of luck ought to!

Now I cannot close such a practical article as this without a word of caution. You must bear in mind that your rifle will not be a success in every community. Some people are sensitive about having bullets whistle around their homes, and there is always some hardy old carp in town to claim that he has felt the wind from your rifle ball.

Any dead domestic animals will be laid at your door whether

you shoot cows or not. I know how it is, because I was once accused in dastardly fashion. A .22 rifle bullet came through a neighbor's window, just missed his wife, causing her only a mild case of hysterics, and buried itself in the wall.

The man dug the bullet out. Then, just because I happened to be practising with my .22 in the next lot when the accident occurred, he had the audacity to say I did the deed. I always held that if he had been working at his office as an honest man should be, he wouldn't have been there to say the things he did.

Farm hands are fussy, too. My brother and I spent a summer practising on sparrows, weather-vanes and my grandmother's cats. We were shooting sparrows off a stone wall one day and the bullets sang a little as they glanced over the heads of the workmen in a neighbor's field. It wasn't bad; you couldn't hear them more than half a mile at most. Would you believe it—the men quit! Theirs was an unreasonable and most deplorable attitude, I felt.

So keep your weather eye out and don't get excited when you're doing this summer shooting. I nearly ruined a railroad station two years ago because a large pheasant flew in a line with it. A dumb friend of mine, conducting a scientific experiment, shot at a sparrow with an old long-barreled rifle—a .44, I think. He missed the sparrow but hit a house and put a hole through two walls, a closet door and six dresses belonging to the lady of the house. Perhaps she didn't have a few words to say!

The same energetic sportsman borrowed a 10-gauge shotgun from me. Wishing to test its pattern before he took it out on game, he shot it at a door on his next-door neighbor's barn. There happened to be an automobile parked behind that door. Later, my friend bought a new radiator for the car.

If you follow the suggestions of this article—shoot rats, woodchucks and crows; hunt diligently in the summer—you will become a great shot. I know, because two years ago, after a summer put in that way, I missed a brace of pheasants as big as buzzards, missed them in the open with my faithful .12. If you are that kind of a shot, too, summer practice is not what you need.

You should tie a piece of extra-strong cord to your big toe and to the trigger of your most deadly gun. Load the gun, look intently in the muzzle, then stretch your leg. You're entirely welcome. Next!

THE BROWNIE COMPANY, LTD.¹

*"He was the bird-findin'est dog and the
most sold dog in seven states"*

By NASH BUCKINGHAM

I AM EATING lunch in Doug Stamper's Cotton Exchange Restaurant. It is Friday, and I am undecided which to tackle: shrimp gumbo, or a tall order of channel-catfish steak sauté with French fries and corn-dodgers dished up as only Mingo, Doug's colored chef, turns off such victuals. I compromise by warming up on a bowl of gumbo while Queen Lil puts in for the hot cat and trimmings.

Doug Stamper runs an interesting chop-house. Forenoons, 'twixt nine and ten o'clock, our Memphis cotton merchants drift in to drink coffee or coke, talk shooting and fishing, and incidentally try to gig one another a few points, give or take, on strict middling or long staple. If you are not in cotton, you just sit around under the ceiling fans and see a lot of big fish landed right there in Stamper's place.

It is the same during gunning seasons, except the cotton fellows are busier bustling about their market and haven't quite the time to laze around Doug's and swap lies. At that, many a sand-bar safari or duck trek to the river bottoms and ricelands is planned, and sometimes takes place right in the café. Frank Donelson says

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it wouldn't surprise him any time to walk into Doug's and see some guy hunkered down behind the steam radiator, with his goose decoys set out on the tables. Hundreds of quail, ducks, geese, wild turkey, and even bear and deer are bagged in Stamper's during the winter. Some of the longest shots I've ever seen made have been pulled off between the coffee urns and the kitchen peep-hole.

I sit there, stirring rice and hot sauce into the shrimp gumbo. All the while I am intent on the prospect of those thick slabs of juicy catfish sizzling in black butter and fine herbs that Queen Lil will shortly deal me off her well-rounded forearm—and possibly into my lap. Her job is a hazardous one, because some of the hombres are all the time throwing up their guns to illustrate snap shots, or chunking plugs and shooting flies every which way. For my money, Mingo's blue channel catfish sauté rates a draw with Parker House swordfish or Antoine's pompano en papier.

Johnny Caughlin sits opposite me, gouging into a cut of red flesh and wondering out loud whether we had better fish up or down the West Ditch this afternoon. I have in mind the swift water below Boat-Run Chute—the smallmouths have been running larger thereabout. But Johnny has become saturated with coffee-hour propaganda put out by Charlie Osier and Lloyd Judson, and is sold on the wider water. O.K., we'll fish the West Ditch, but on one condition: any big bass we land will be fried for supper at that little restaurant in Marked Tree, along with some oxheart tomatoes and frazzled spuds.

There are two black wenches in that kitchen who must weigh six hundred pounds. Their two husbands won't scale half that, tied together. Those fat cooks have the bass skinned and boned into steaks. These are rolled in powdered corn flakes and dropped into very hot, pure cottonseed oil. The fatties stand over the skillets like watchdogs. Every chunk of bass comes out the same shade of brown and tenderized texture. When asked how she fries 'em all the same color, Captola says, "I watches de feesh, and whin hit gits de color of mah ole man's ginger-cake hide I snatches hit outa de skillet—hit's jes' right 'den foh eatin'."

All of a sudden, through the haze hanging over the steam-table, I sight my old bird-hunting friend, Milton Throcker. He lingers along the grub-reef with his nose in the air, sniffing barbecued ribs and cabbage fumes like a discouraged bloodhound suddenly getting his sinus full of fresh murderer's scent. It comes over me that, like myself, Milt is getting along in years. But I realize with a sort of fierce pride that he is still, by long odds, the greatest bird-dog salesman the world will ever know. To hold that title, you and your dogs have to have a lot on the ball and, at the same time, never let anybody get anything on you. Milt is an artist in his line, and a great one.

His approach and sales talk are easy and short and descriptively straight to the point. He rarely has the actual dog in stock about which he is talking, but he has the ideal type in mind. If he actually has the dog, the chances are he doesn't know its name. But he keeps a bunch of assorted names on tap and claps one on at random if you show the slightest evidence of interest. He fits a name to a dog's personality and applies it like a caress.

All Milt's selling is done by indirect suggestion. He takes you with him and the dog on a word-picture hunt, and then takes you home and seats you by the fireside with a toddy in your hand and the noble animal asleep on the rug. Then, amazingly, the dog suddenly isn't for sale. Milt is that daring he will often change the subject or postpone details until he can go home and wrestle some more with whether or not he really wants to sell old Kate or Nigger.

You get the feeling that the dog really means an awful lot to the fellow and that the thought of its not having a good home is simply killing him. I have actually watched him shed tears, take the money and then attempt to force it back upon the customer and reclaim his dog. Money never seems to interest him as compared with art for art's sake in selling bird dogs. I've watched him soften up a prospect until fifteen or twenty dollars either way didn't amount to a drop in the bucket.

Milt is steeped in pedigree lore of a coarser type and literally drips blood lines. Deep down, however, his heart belongs to the

great canine proletariat of cold-blooded meat dogs. But Milt can rise to incredible heights in building up some common egg-buster from Bug Tussle Corners into a streamlined, faultlessly broken stake dog. Many a time I've seen some customer reach for his wallet while merely visualizing Milt's current offering point fifteen bebies and forty-six singles before the lunch hour.

It is a year or so since I've set eyes on Milt, and I am positively not in the market for any more shooting dogs. What with a kennel full of pointers, setters and springers, I am the poorest thing around town. But I am tickled to see Milt, because he is the finest company on earth and I never knew him to sell a real friend a bird dog that he couldn't personally and honestly recommend. Besides, Milt likes to reminisce about the time he claimed the woodcock and I made him unbreech his gun right quick to prove he hadn't even popped a cap at the bird. That was the same day we shot a match at quail for a ten-dollar hat. Milt got five birds behind and rode around a dense thicket and came back afoot, claiming his mule bucked him off and jammed his pump gun so it wouldn't fire but once.

So Johnny Caughlin and I give Milt the high sign and he comes on over, all dated up with a load of country ham with rice and red gravy and a wedge of Mingo's famous sweet-potato pie. Of all the lunches for a hillbilly! But trust country folks to "stick by their raisin'." As to fancy foods, "We 'uns is down on what we 'uns ain't up on," says Milt.

Milt isn't settled in his chair good before he edits the news to the effect that he is now mayor of his home town, Olive Wreath. He says it is most difficult for him to reach the city nowadays on account of being loaded to the guards with civic and Federal enterprises. To hear him sound off you would think he is expecting long-distance telephone calls every minute from Harry Hopkins, Mayor LaGuardia, or "Henry Penny" Morgenthau. But Johnny and I are hep to such broadcasting. We know that Milt's civic enterprises around Olive Wreath consist of keeping watermelon rinds swept off the mayor's office porch and having the "deppity constable" stop the boys from whittling up the City Hall benches.

About now, Neely Grant decoys up-wind to a bait of pig's-knuckle with fragrant kraut. Neely is sort of distantly related to Milt. But with mutual misgivings, if not apprehension, they have both quit trying to figure all that out years ago. Of late, however, Neely has been going in heavier and heavier for field trials. He is even getting his picture taken frequently in these "left to right" society shots, with the tang of social wildlife slightly impregnated with horse lather.

Milt claims Neely can't fork a horse any more unless clad in a Colonel Fuller weskit, Jacob's coat-of-many-colors, and those tight-calfed, spanker-boom breeches called Jod-somethings. He says Neely can take a running start at Gladstone and never skip a blood line until he bumps his nose into the back cover of the field-trial stud book. Milt resents that, claiming Neely still has a rim of dried potlicker under his ears and that he'll run under a farmer's wagon every time a country dog yaps. They trade a few insults, and just then up barges Queen Lil with the viands.

For a spell nothing can be heard but the soup. Then Milt wipes off his necktie and says, all joking aside, times are harder for him than a note shaver's heart. His bumblebee cotton is in the grass, the boll-weevils are dive-bombing him, and his obligation at the bank nears dead-line. All he needs now is for some uninsured hit-and-run driver to smear him. He says the only sane piece of New Deal legislation ever proposed by his state has just collapsed. He and Bob Tyson had a bill drawn that put all bird dogs on relief over closed hunting seasons. According to Milt, the bill was actually favorably reported out of committee, too. But, like saps, he and Bob forgot to include relief for foxhounds as well as bird dogs.

The foxhound bloc, a very powerful one, hollered its head off, and some hick Congressman horned in with an amendment to include said dogs' and hounds' owners and put them on relief with their pooches. That sounded swell until another representative got up and said the bill mentioned dogs only; so he favored amending it to read "dogs, bitches and male offspring of same." This started a tremendous debate, and there were threats hurled

about filibustering and even some shooting talk. By the time they got the matter straightened out so that foxhounds and bird dogs could both ride the gravy train, the war started.

"You know," says Milt, "Hitler had all the po' dawgs in Germany slaughtered except the police dogs for the Army and the Gestapo. Me and Bob thought we'd better soft-pedal all political talk; so we had the bill killed instead." Milt sort of choked on his rice and gravy. "Killin' pigs jes' foh nothin' is bad enough," he says, "without takin' it out on the po' dawgs. I would sure like to see 'em come to my house and try to take ole Nelly." Milt said it all reminded him of the time he was forced to organize the Brownie Company, Ltd. But, we will let him tell it in his own language. Take it away, Milt.

"I bred my ole Tribulation bitch to a dawg that a friend of mine bought off a darky market hunter. The darky claimed he heard another boy originally stole the dawg right after the field trails at the Paul Rainey preserve. Ole Kate whelped six pups, but I couldn't register 'em because Kate didn't have no papers. The dawg had 'em, but the darky was scared to mention it. A friend offered to lend me a set of papers to fit Kate, but he went off fishin' in Pigeon Roost bottoms and took down sick in the bed with chills and fever. I give two of them pups away befo' I had any idea they was all goin' to turn out so good. You know, you can't never tell nothin' 'bout pups.

"At a year ole, the foah I had left was practilley broke dawgs and bird-finders from who-laid-the-rail. One of them pups was a lot faster and mo' intelligent than the others, but the whole bunch was high-tailed whirlwinds. I called that extra fine one Brownie, on account of his heavy liver markin's. He was the onlies' bird dawg I evah seen in my whole life that was steady to wing and shot without no breakin'. The first pottige evah I shot ovah him I jes' bawled, 'Whoa, Brownie!' and, brother, he was like the Rock of Gibraltar."

Some of Neely's kraut went down the wrong alley, and Johnny Caughlin had to pat him on the back. Milt just stoked ham and took water. His engine is really firing by now.

"After their second season, their fame has done spread far and wide around our country. I had five or six fellahs right heah in this town that come out to hunt with me, and they'd try their damndest to buy Brownie. But I jes' laughed at 'em. Then they'd try to buy Sally and Gus and Bob, but nothin' doin'. But 'bout the middle of summer I got in a deep hole financially. I was poss'bly wuss off than I am right at this minute, if sech a thing be in the book, I had a sizable note in the bank, jes' as I have now. But the bank changed presidents, and the new one, ole Charlie Cassoway, didn't like me and the guy on my paper.

"Charlie Cassoway hunted birds a lot hisse'f, but he never owned a decent shootin' dawg in his whole life. He was all the time tryin' to ketch some po' fellow in the hole and grab his hunnerd-dollar dawg when the po' critter couldn't pay a double saw-buck note. He run it ovah some folks, too, 'bout huntin' on their land. He always shot mo'n the limit if no one wasn't watchin'. He'd heard 'bout Brownie and my three other grand dawgs and was sorter settin' back, lickin' his chops, ovah my note. Figgered he'd git me in the hole some way and maybe bear down on me and Brownie.

"One mawnin' I eased into his bank to sorter spy out where I stood ahead of time. Charlie Cassoway says, 'Milt, yo' paper has been in this bank so long I find the directors don't charge you interest no mo'—they jes' bill you with the storage.' I laughed and says, 'Well, maybe so, but I got a good man's name on the back of that note, ain't I, Charlie?' He says, 'Yup, Ed Kumpers is a perfectly good man, but what good does it do a bank if they don't neither of you evah pay nothin'?' I says, 'Oh, I can pay it all right.' Charlie comes right back. 'All right,' says he, 'I am delighted to hear that; so jes' go ahead and pay off when hit falls due—and let the matter rest on that basis.' 'That's final, is it?' I says. And he says, 'Yup, and with a period thereafter.'

"I went on back to the house, sorter talkin' to myse'f, I was so mad. 'Well,' I says, 'hit looks lak some bird-dawg sellin' is going to have to take place. Maybe I better phone Ed Kumpers to come by and talk the situation ovah.' "

Milt borrowed a corn-dodger and loaded his knife-blade with gravied rice. Polishing this off, he continued.

"Me and Ed laid around all afternoon in the hammocks discussin' ways and means. We wanted to not only pay off that note with Charlie Cassoway, but to sock him some sort of jolt whilst we was doin' it. Finally an idea come to me, and the next minute one hit Ed Kumpers. The next day I come to the city, and Ed got in his car and started a round of all the big farms in the county that had lots of quail on 'em.

"The man heah in town that wanted Brownie the wuss was ole man Frank Fessick. I dropped round to his cotton office, and we set around and talked 'bout the crop and ev'ything in gen'al till I yawned and says, 'Well, Mist' Frank, I guess hit won't be long now till bird-shootin' time, and we have sho' got a fine hatch of young quail.' He says, 'Milt, darn yo' ole hide, how long befo' you goin' to break down and sell me that dawg Brownie?' I says, 'Mist' Frank, you and I been friends all my life, and I would sho' like to do you a favor, but I jes' cain't find hit in my heart to part with that dawg.'

"So I got up and started foh the doah, but turned around jes' as I got to it. 'Mist' Frank,' I says, 'there ain't but one way on earth I'd consider makin' a deal on Brownie, but there ain't no use talkin' 'bout it 'cause I know you wouldn't accept it and I wouldn't blame you.' He says, 'Come on back heah in the office,' and handed me a two-bit seegar. You unnerstand, he done asked for a proposition. 'Whut's on yo' mind?' he says. I says, 'How would you like to have a fine lot of land to hunt ovah with oodles of pottiges on it and Brownie to find 'em and hunt foh you as long as you and him lives?' 'Gosh,' he says, 'Milt, nothin' would suit me better.' "

Milt munched some pie and snickered to himself. " 'Well,' I says, 'tell you whut I'll do—I'll sell you a huntin' interest in Brownie. You'll own him, but he stays with me. It won't cost you no board foh him. You can come and hunt him any time you git good and ready, but you mustn't never take him away from me. Ef I ain't there, Ed Kumpers will have to go with you, 'cause

Brownie is a one-man dawg and he won't hunt foh nobody but me and Ed. And another thing, Mist' Frank. Ef you and me makes this trade, you mustn't never tell a human soul 'bout it, because I've done turned down so many fellas 'bout buyin' Brownie that hit would make 'em awful sore.'

"He says, 'Name yo' price.' I says, 'Two hunnerd dollahs.' The old man run right on back into his office and drawed me a check. He was sorter tremblin' and says, 'Boy, hit's a deal.' 'Yes,' I says, 'hit's a deal, but remember—you done swo' you won't never let on lak you owns Brownie.' He helt up his right hand and swo'.

"That gimmie a start. I went to foah other fellas that had hunted ovah Brownie and made the same trade with 'em. But I was honest about it. I made 'em all ast me first to sell 'em Brownie. I got plum' in the elevator at one guy's office befo' I started proceedin'. When I got through, I had done formed the Brownie Company, limited to five stockholders, and the onlies' liability was in seein' that no two or three of 'em didn't git there at the same time. It didn't happen but once, and then Brownie was reported sorter feelin' bad, and Ed took one of the stockholders durin' the mawnin' and Brownie recovered and entertained the other that afternoon.

"Well, I got in my car and come on home, singin' the whole way, with a thousand smackers in the ole wallet. Next day Ed Kumpers tol' me he had done sewed up the shootin' rights foh five years on mo' good quail-huntin' ground than we could hunt ovah in a lifetime. He got hit foh practilly nothin', too, maybe ten bucks ev'y so often and the promise of one of Brownie's pups now and then. We spent a whole week puttin' up posted signs and registerin' leases. We kept mighty quiet about hit, too. That night I says to Brownie, 'Brownie, you is prob'ly the most organized bird dawg in the whole world.'

"That season the boys come out from town, and they sho' had fine shootin'. But me and Ed Kumpers was keepin' an eye peeled foh Charlie Cassoway. We had done paid the note the day hit come due, and the shock lak to killed ole Charlie. We jes' marched into the bank and started peelin' off hunnerd-dollah

bills lak they was five-spots. Ole Charlie jes' stood there with his mouth open, much as to say, 'Howinhell did you-all git that dough?' Then me and Ed set a scout on his trail, 'cause we'd done heard he was mad 'bout all them posted signs around the county.

"The scout come to me one mawnin' and says, 'Charlie Cassoway is figurin' on goin' bird huntin' today. He'll start on the Claybrook place, but after dinner he aims to cross the bottoms and drop in on the lower side of that Pumphrey place you and Ed's got posted. It's full of birds. You and the warden trail him, and you'll hear him shootin' and grab him red-handed.'

"I let him get a good start after we seen him and his darky cross the road. He had a pair of pretty good plug dawgs, too. Boy, was he havin' a time killin' birds! We let him go till around sundown so as to be sure. Then we closed in on him, right in the middle of bustin' into some scattered singles. I says, 'Charlie, you needn't try to say you didn't know this was leased land. I done seen you ride by fifty posted signs.' The game warden says, 'And lemme count yo' birds and see yo' license.'

"Charlie stammered and stuttered. He had left his license at home, he claimed. He had done bagged twice the legal limit. He also had five doves and a squir'l. The warden says, 'Well, Mist' Cassoway, nearly as I kin figger out, you is done been ketched on five or six counts. Lemme see—shootin' on posted land, unlawful entry, vi'lation of the bag limit, shootin' doves agin' the Federal law, shootin' a squir'l out of season—and—and maybe you ain't got no dawg-license tags.' Charlie Cassoway jes' stood there, lookin' sickly. The warden kept addin' up the score, and then he says, 'I think they's one or two mo' indictments poss'ble, but I'll have to check and double-check.' He says, 'Good evenin', Mist' Cassoway, we will be seein' you in cote.'

"We rode on to town, but Charlie made a bee-line foh Ed Kum-pers to try and beg off. But Ed says, 'Naw, Charlie, you talked awful rough to Milt 'bout that note; so now you goin' to pay lak you made us pay—th'u the nose.' It cost him mo'n three hunnerd

dollahs. The jedge th'owed the book at him, beginnin' at Magna Carta and endin' with the Twenty-Third Psalm."

Milt cleaned up his pie crust and stirred his coffee industriously.

"What happened to the Brownie Company, Limited?" asked Johnny.

Milt grinned. "Brownie lived five years mo', and all them fellas stayed perfectly satisfied. They all tol' me that Brownie was the best huntin' investment they evah made."

Johnny and Neely fled the scene. Milt sat there, sipping his Java. "You know," he said finally, "that five hunnerd extra dollahs I made off'n Brownie paid my li'l girl's schoolin'. I sho' loved that dawg. He's buried in the flowah garden right outside my bedroom window—he was the grandest dawg and the finest friend a fella evah had."

And somehow, the way old Milt said it, I knew he meant it. We sat there, sort of ruminating along. Then Milt says, "Buck, I seen a dawg last season that comes closer to bein' good as Brownie as any dawg I've evah seen slash th'u a field. He's only three yeahs ole, stands up to his game jes' as proud as Li'l Lawd Fauntleroy, and will ramble lak an errin' husband. He's got a tail like a darnin'-needle and a choke-bored nose—he's the best retriever I evah seen. Why—why—honest, Buck, you nevah in yo' whole life——"

But why prolong the agony? Yep, I bought the dog.

GRIZZLY FIGHT¹

Wolves versus grizzlies! A famous Alaskan describes a bitter, action-packed, free-for-all battle royal of the wilderness

By FRANK DUFRESNE

THE FEMALE WOLF at the mouth of the den pointed her gray muzzle into the sky and gave one short howl. Not loud; you could barely hear it two hundred yards away, even in that still air. But it was like the sounding of a gong at a prize-fight. It signaled the start of a battle royal the like of which no man had ever recorded—a free-for-all between four timber wolves and four grizzly bears. The setting was an open arena in the shadow of snow-covered Mt. McKinley, towering twenty thousand feet into the blue.

As though projected from catapults, the wolves launched themselves at their giant adversaries. Almost quicker than the eye could follow, the grizzlies pivoted on their haunches and began laying about them with lusty wallops which, if they had landed, would have mashed the wolves like flies under a swatter. But in the first wild flurry of the melee no bear reached home with a Sunday punch.

Faster than the larger animals, each of the wolves flashed under the whistling rights and lefts, slashed savagely into the flanks of the grizzlies, then leaped backward with mouthfuls of blond hair. The sheer audacity of the onslaught confused the bears.

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Clearly, nothing like this had ever happened to them before. They crowded into a huddle around the big female as though undecided what to do about it.

You could call it a fight between families: two mothers, each with a trio of yearlings. Ordinarily they wouldn't have tangled. Wolves generally have plenty of respect for bears, especially for the cream-colored, dish-faced Toklat grizzly.

This bear is as tough and ornery as they come. His disposition is like that of a buzz-saw snarling its way into a hemlock knot. He's not the biggest bear in the world—maybe six or eight hundred pounds—but his strength and belligerence are legends in the Northern mountains. His long, polished claws are like so many meat hooks. He can scoop a ground-squirrel from its burrow, or slash a caribou to earth, with a single sweep. He swaggers over the high ranges of interior Alaska with a "better-leave-me-alone-if-you-want-to-go-home-in-one-piece" air about him. Other wild folk clear the trail for Lord Toklat.

On this June morning Frank Glaser, veteran Government hunter, lay hidden at a vantage-point studying the actions of timber wolves at denning time. Below him, on the side-hill, a mother wolf had dug her den. In the den were some small pups, and sprawled in the near vicinity were what appeared to be her three young of the previous year. The yearling wolves were all larger than the parent animal and fully able to forage for themselves.

As is the habit of wolves, they had buried several game carcasses near the den. It was the scent of decaying meat that had attracted the grizzly family to the scene. Glaser's binoculars suddenly filled with bears as they rambled into the picture. With complete unconcern the big fellows had approached to within thirty feet of the den when the brush exploded wolves at them.

The slant gray eyes of the wolves had observed the coming of the bears, and they seemed to have developed a plan. They swarmed over one of the yearling grizzlies, one wolf worrying it at the head end while the others tore at its hindquarters. When the mother grizzly roared in to save her youngster, the wolves

shifted their attack to her so swiftly that she became the central object in a swirling mass of slashing figures almost before she realized what had happened. Not that there was anything slow about her actions; her claws raked the air with deadly precision as though she was determined to wipe out every wolf in the pack. But the wolves were speedy and elusive; they gave the impression that they were working like a well-drilled team of cutthroats.

The bears appeared at this time to have no thought other than to maul their way clear of this nest of hornets into which they had blundered. Abruptly they turned tail and headed for a near-by knoll, hotly pursued by the wolves.

Having driven off the enemy, the wolves then retired to the den, keeping watchful eyes on the bears all the while. It is probable that the skirmish might have ended at this juncture had not the bears discovered some more buried meat and, with complete disregard of owner's rights, started to dig it out. In the meantime a large black wolf, evidently the mate of the small gray female, had joined the pack. The newcomer was allergic to grizzlies, or maybe they were rooting into his private cache, for without a sound he streaked through the low berry bushes and attacked the four of them single-handed.

The grizzly female spun about on her haunches to meet the black wolf, and in a split second they were embroiled in an unbelievable fury of murderous toe-to-toe slugging from which it didn't seem possible the wolf could emerge alive. At times the smaller black animal was completely hidden under the yellow body as the grizzly struck and bit at him, her jaws flinging white foam in all directions. Once the wolf took a ten-foot ride on the end of a left hook, but he no sooner hit the earth than he tore back into the fight. And he was punishing the mighty grizzly; his jaws seemed to be full of sharp knives that cut through the tough hide of his big antagonist with ease.

But fast as were the movements of the black male wolf, stinging as were the bites inflicted, you felt that it was like a match between a Henry Armstrong and a Joe Louis—sooner or later the big guy would connect and the fans could go home. Once when the black

wolf leaped straight at the bear's face, you thought this moment had come.

While the yearling grizzlies appeared content to let mother do all the fighting for the family, the other wolves had different ideas. Just when it looked as though the black male might have tackled more than he could handle, three of them joined the fray again. In a flash all eight animals were at it claws and fangs.

No one person could hope to gain more than a general impression of what was taking place. All Glaser saw was leaping wolves dodging deadly blows by fractions of inches; twisting forms boring in, cutting, tearing, ducking and weaving. Indignant grizzlies goaded to new heights of fury.

For an hour the struggle went on, the bears grimly determined to fight it out along these lines all summer if need be, the wolves working with cold and calculating intelligence. Their endurance was remarkable. It was evident, too, that they had not the slightest fear of the grizzlies. Their tactics shifted. They would try to separate one of the yearling bears from the group, and when they succeeded for a few seconds at a time they fairly smothered it. You saw here that, while the grizzly was a power-house of destruction, he was not a gang fighter.

The wolf, on the other hand, was a master of pack-fighting strategy; he was adept at feinting to give his team mate a chance to rip into a vital spot. In action so fast that the human eye could barely follow it—with seven other whirling animals to watch as they stabbed their opponents scores of times—not one of the timber wolves had received a fatal blow during the encounter!

With the passage of time the observer came to the conclusion that none of the yearling grizzlies, perhaps not even the female herself, could have long survived a concerted attack by all the wolves. When a single wolf and a single bear mixed it, your impression would have been that, while the wolf was the faster and carried the fight to his bulkier foe, eventually he would be on the receiving end of a lethal haymaker. But you couldn't prove it by anything that had occurred in this battle.

And of all the animals engaged in the struggle none was more

anxiously occupied than the old grizzly. She raced to the rescue of first one yearling and then another, knowing full well that the instant her back was turned at least one wolf would be tearing at her hamstrings. Her rage at such times was hideous, but it served only to incite the wolves to more relentless punishment. Darting in and out, they suddenly became aware of a weakening in one of the yearlings and, like merciless tacticians, centered their attack on this one animal, sensing a kill.

By now it was obvious that under these conditions the wolves were more than a match for the grizzlies; that they were like speedy fighter planes attacking a formation of heavy bombers, and that only the mightiest efforts of the grizzly female had saved at least one of her yearlings from being torn to pieces. It was an astonishing thing to be forced to believe—but there it was. Was this proud grizzly family to be destroyed piecemeal by an equal number of opponents whom it outweighed nearly eight to one?

At this moment the grizzly mother executed a surprising move. Disregarding the ghostly forms gouging into her flanks, she drove her family, pell-mell before her, down into the thick scrub-brush in full retreat. In the dense willows bordering the East Fork they disappeared from sight. Another pitched battle must have taken place there, but in a short time two of the yearling bears broke into view and made a bee-line for the river.

Shortly the other yearling came limping out of the willows, convoyed by the mother. He was badly mauled. Was it instinct or good judgment that sent this hurt animal well out into the river, where it lay down, all but covered by the rushing torrent? When the wolves appeared on the gravel bar, they faced three grim bears, backs to the water. It was the final stand. The advantage had shifted to the grizzlies. The wolves trotted back to the den. The fight was over.

High on the ridge the Government hunter carefully placed his binoculars in the well-worn case. He did not rise immediately to be on his way. Rather, he looked on beyond the green arena to the snowy reaches of mighty McKinley, as though the solidity of the great mountain were necessary to give credence to what had taken place.

PLENTY OF BEAR¹

*Scalp-tingling thrills from browns, blacks
and grizzlies*

By RUSSELL ANNABEL

MAYBE it will help if I tell you about the experience Gunn Buckingham and I had at Chinitna Bay. It was one of those rowdy blue-and-gold June mornings, with a whiplash wind roaring in from the open Pacific. We had climbed to the rim of a shallow, brush-grown basin in which we hoped there might be a stray Kodiak. As we came out on the crest and looked down I spotted one—a fair-sized bear standing on the bank of a frozen streamlet at the base of the hill.

Buckingham slammed a cartridge into the chamber of his rifle, and then startled me by asking, "Which one of 'em shall I take?"

"What do you mean 'which one'? There's only one bear down there."

"There's two."

"There's one."

This might have continued indefinitely if I had not happened to glance up the ridge on our left. A biscuit-toss up the slope was a circular patch of tall dead redtop grass, surrounded by deep snow drifts. Leading into the grass was a line of deep-wallowed bear tracks, but there were none to show where the animal had come out. Looking closely, I made out a brownish object partially

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screened by the weaving grass. It looked like a moss-covered boulder, but it wasn't, because suddenly it turned over, and four immense brown paws showed above the wind-brushed redtop.

Buckingham said: "Holy smoke! We must have got into a convention of bear," and started shooting.

The basin erupted Kodiaks. There had been at least five in the brush below, and they tore out in all directions, smashing through the alders like elephants. The one in the grass island reared straight up at Buckingham's first shot. He looked like a woolly hangover from the ice age. I could have sworn he was as tall as the spruce trees behind him.

Buckingham squinted along his rifle sights, and fired again. The heavy soft-nose struck with a wicked "whoomp," and the bear crumpled without a kick left in him.

The point is not that you may be caught in a bear stampede during your hunting trip, but that, square mile for square mile, the bear population of Alaska exceeds that of any other country on earth. There are so many species and sub-species in the territory that even the scientists who have studied them cannot agree on the precise number. And they come in an amazing variety of colors: white, blue, black, brown and yellow. If your wife insists that you bring back a bear pelt to match her new bridge set, you can safely undertake the job.

A couple of years ago an Indian hunter named Charlie Toughluck, up in the Nelchina country, killed a blue glacier bear with snow-white ears. Nellie Neal, who runs a roadhouse at the head of Kenai Lake, is the proud possessor of a red grizzly pelt. This extraordinary trophy came from the Sinjack Mountains, two hundred miles above the arctic circle. One look at it will convince you that there are in this world stranger things than we have dreamt of in our philosophy.

Early spring—between May 20 and June 20—is the best time to hunt Kodiaks. Not only are the pelts better then, but the bears are easier to locate. The alders are not in foliage, and the bears stand out so plainly against the naked drifts that often you can spot one from two to three miles distant, without using binoculars.

Outfit at Seward, and cruise around the Kenai coast to Kodiak Island, or to the low-lying tundra hills of the Alaska Peninsula. Or charter a gasboat at Anchorage and hunt the west coast of Cook Inlet. Put into Chinitna, Iniskin, or Illiamna Bays—all good spring bear ranges. At Chinitna you will have the thrilling experience of hunting on the slopes of Mount Redoubt, a live volcano with a plume of smoke and steam rising from an icy cleft at its summit.

Hunting Kodiaks in the autumn is a pretty unsatisfactory sport. The bears are all down in the flats, and the flats are knee-deep with mud and slush. The alders are thicker than hair on a dog's back, and the weather is rotten.

It rains on the Alaskan coast in September. Boy, how it rains! They tell a story about a schoolma'am who related the Biblical account of the flood to a class of young Alaskans. It didn't go over so well. One small sourdough stood up and allowed that it had been raining for nigh on a month and a half, and the creek out front hadn't come up a foot.

Of course, if you are tough and don't mind sloshing around in mud-holes with a wild north wind whistling around your ears and rain sluicing down your back, go to it. You may be lucky enough to knock over a bear or two, but the pelts won't compare with spring pelts, and nobody will envy you the trip. You'll spend a good share of your time drying socks, wiping mildew off your boots and gun cases, and trying to keep the sugar from turning to syrup.

If you have a few rounds of ammunition left after taking your limit of bear, spend a day or two shooting leopard-seal. Cruise along the river mouths, with a phonograph playing in the boat's stern. The seal, believe it or not, will follow the music.

Maybe you have shot at some difficult targets in your time, but wait until you have tried to hit the sleek brown head of a seal bobbing in a gasboat's wake. It requires a technique which makes trapshooting a child's pastime by comparison. And the really swell thing about it is that the Territorial Government will pay a

substantial bounty for the nose and whiskers of each seal you succeed in killing.

In case seal shooting doesn't square with your marksmanship, try hunting whales. Anybody should be able to hit a whale. In the spring, herds of little belugas, the sacred white whales of the Aleuts, swarm in these waters. And occasionally a big 50-footer comes in from the ocean. Better leave these alone, however, for you may have trouble on your hands if you happen to annoy an old bull whale when he is engaged in the springtime business of courting a lady whale.

Buckingham and I made this mistake once, and I still believe the ensuing mix-up caused the gray streak in my once auburn locks. The barnacle-backed bull we fired at was so enraged by one little .30 slug that he lobtailed all over the place, and came within five feet of smashing our boat to kindling and sending us all to Davy Jones' locker. Cheechakos can get themselves into more trouble!

By all means supplement your store grub with local seafoods. They make a tall-water chowder on this coast which cannot be equaled in the round world. The ingredients, it seems, are a jealously guarded secret.

I just happened to be standing at the galley skylight one day when the cook was preparing the noble dish; so I can report that it contains, among other things, sea celery, fillet of silver hake, halibut cheeks, cockle clams, bacon, diced onions and—this appears to be its crowning glory—fried cubes of king salmon milt. The dangerous thing about ordering a bait of this superlative chowder is that it may cause you to forget bear hunting altogether. However, I advise you to pull yourself together and take a chance. You'll never regret it.

Will Kodiaks charge? Sure they will. I have never seen a wild animal that wouldn't charge under the proper set of circumstances. Fool around long enough with a porcupine, and he'll do his fighting best to fill your boots with quills. A week-old seal pup, cornered on the beach, will come at you with the worst intentions in the world.

As to the percentage of Kodiaks that will charge through sheer bad temper and hatred of man, you'll have to consult somebody else. I know four or five men who have been badly mauled by Kodiaks which, so they say, came busting unexpectedly out of the brush, all ready for war. I knew two men who were killed by Kodiaks after they had shot at the animals and failed to stop them. And I know others who have committed every indiscretion from falling over Kodiaks to popping them with .22 rifles to see them jump, without getting even a dirty look in return.

My advice is: don't take any chances. Know your rifle thoroughly, don't stop shooting until you are positive your bear is dead, and never, never under any circumstances, follow a wounded bear into the alders. Failure to follow this last cardinal tenet of bear hunting has caused most of the hair-raising tight scrapes you read about. An alder jungle is no place to meet an angry bear of any species. A ragged old female Kodiak with a pair of gangling cubs growled at me in a hillside thicket one day, and I nearly broke my neck trying to locate her so that I would know which way to light out of there.

A tragedy that took place down near the Canadian boundary has haunted me for years. Big Axel Johnson, a trapper, came home to his cabin in the early autumn twilight and found a Kodiak breaking into his meat cache. Johnson had no rifle with him, but was carrying a heavy double-bitted ax.

The bear charged, and as it came bounding at him Johnson split its skull with the ax. But the vitality of the animal was such that it mauled him terribly before it died. Johnson dragged himself to his bunk and scrawled a last note to his partner. It read: "Dear Jim—The bear killed me, but, by Heaven, I killed him too."

Don't get excited if you happen on a Kodiak whose fur gleams like polished silver. Take your guide's advice and let the beggar go his way in peace—the color is an illusion. These silvery-looking bears are really the color of a new burlap sack, and are not considered good trophies. Some quality of the sunlight reflecting from the snow makes them look like platinum blondes.

The darker the pelt, the better the Kodiak trophy. Just set your heart on an 11-foot bear with fur the color of rare old hand-rubbed mahogany, and keep saying over and over to yourself: "I'm going to get him. I'm going to get him, by golly, if it takes until June 20." And maybe you will. Stranger things have happened.

Your crew will subject you to the usual sourdough horse-play, if they think you are the right sort of guy and can take it. Here's one they will try to put over.

Back in town, after the hunt is over, they'll tell you about an extraordinary pink bear pelt owned by a member of the local fire department. Naturally, you are eager to see it. So, taken in tow by the skipper, guide, packer, cook and engineer, you go up to the fire hall. Here, the chief conniver opens a shower door, and within you see one of the fire laddies soaping and scrubbing himself. After a dazed moment or two you get it—then, of course, it's up to you to buy drinks for the whole framing lot of them, plus a box of cigars for the fire department.

Maybe I shouldn't reveal this, but it's the only revenge open to me after the whole-souled way I fell for the lousy joke. Anyway, they'll get you with the ice-worm stunt, or the old one about the barrel of pickled bear tongues, or any one of a dozen others designed to put cheechakos in their proper place.

You won't find many black bears in either Kodiak or grizzly country; but go up to the Glacier Lake, ten miles southeast of the headwaters of Knik River, or over among the grassy Kenai hills near the forks of Chicaloon River, and you'll find them thicker than fiddlers in hades. It is best to pack in; but if you are pressed for time, charter an airplane at Anchorage.

Pitch your camp high on a hillside where you can look out over a wide scope of country, and get busy with your binoculars. The bears will be up in the timber-line blueberry patches, putting on fat for hibernation. It's easy to locate them, for their black coats stand out against the autumn hillsides like headlights on a raft. There are some big ones, too—6- and 7-footers. The first of September is the time to start hunting.

A good thing to remember is that all blacks are pirates and have a mighty yearning for the white man's grub. A camp left unguarded in black-bear country is a sure invitation for trouble. For some unfathomable reason, blacks have never learned to recognize a tent entrance. Or maybe they prefer to make their own entrances and exits. At any rate, whichever the case, they always tear a large hole in one side of your tent going in, and another large hole in the opposite side going out.

This custom of theirs has reduced legions of strong men to tears. It is beyond the power of language to describe the havoc and confusion a black bear can create inside a cook tent. Tin cans are a cinch for him—he crushes 'em in his mouth like gumdrops. And chances are, having discovered that good things come in tin, he'll hammer your camp stove flat as a pancake, trying to get something edible out of it.

Some time back, the Game Commission discovered that black bears are predators, and made outlaws of the species by lifting all protection. They were, it appears, killing moose calves, which was only natural of them, considering their fondness for fresh meat and the lack of watchfulness which characterizes moose mothers. While a cow will fight to the death for her calf if she happens to be present when danger threatens, she has the bad habit of leaving her infant cached in a thicket for a considerable period of time each day. A black bear comes along, finds the calf curled up in the alders—and the result is a square meal for the bear and another pain in the neck for the Game Commission.

Up in the tall Knik peaks, however, where there are no moose, the situation is different. Here, if a bear wants fresh meat in any quantity, he is faced with the prospect of going up against the rapier horns and iron courage of an eternally watchful old nanny goat. This has had the effect of making vegetarians of the Knik black bear.

When I was up on the Glacier Lake trapping goats for the Biological Survey, I once saw a black bear make an elaborate stalk for an old nanny and a pair of kids. He scrooched up a ravine on his belly, bounded like a flash across an open shale pitch, and

floated softly as a midnight shadow down a daisy-starred swale to within fifteen feet of where the little family of goats was peacefully enjoying the noonday sun. Just as he was getting set for the final rush at one of the kids, the nanny stood up and faced him.

Having looked an irate nanny in the eye at close range myself, I know exactly how the bear felt. She looked as big as a buffalo, her horns were yards long, and suddenly there didn't seem to be any percentage in carrying the thing any further. That must have been the way the bear felt, for after a moment's hesitation he turned and shuffled off down the mountain.

A scrawny little 300-pound bear gave me a scare one day. I was sitting under a trap-line cache on Metal Creek, a tributary to Knik River, making a cup of tea. Suddenly I heard a commotion in a near-by high-bush cranberry thicket. In a moment, out came the black bear, whoofing and popping his jaws in no uncertain manner.

As my rifle was down in the canoe, I swarmed up one of the cache legs to the roof, and sat there, slapping mosquitoes, for two solid hours while the bear did sentry duty below. Finally he wandered off, looking back over his shoulder at every few paces to growl at me. Don't ask me what had put him on the war trail. Maybe he had been disappointed in love, or maybe he just didn't like the idea of my being around there. At any rate, I am convinced he would have given me a bad time of it if he had caught me out in the open without my rifle.

Indian hunters will tell you that a fighting black is more to be feared than either the grizzly or the Kodiak, for the reason that the latter two species seem always to be in a frantic hurry about mauling a man, while the black will rip and tear at a victim as long as there is a spark of life remaining. This explanation of the Kodiak's tactics may account for the number of men who have lived to tell the tale after being mauled by the big brownies.

The grizzly, of course, is the trophy of trophies, the goal of every sportsman's desire. He has glamour and a reputation for ferocity which has made him the undisputed emperor of the bruin tribe. His fame has been told in story and song since the days

when men hunted him with slate-headed lances and made clothing from his hide.

No camp-fire gathering is a success without at least one grizzly yarn to make the chills run up your spine, and no sportsman's den is properly fitted out unless there is a grizzly trophy or two in it for the owner to brag about. Ask any hunter to name the world's ranking big-game animal, and he'll tell you it's a toss-up between the grizzly and the Siberian tiger, with the sladang crowding them close for honors.

Your best bet for grizzlies in Alaska is the range of shale hills lying between the headwaters of Wood River and Yanert River. Go in by pack-train in the early fall from the Alaska railroad station at Healy. It's an easy three-day trip, with only one pass to climb.

Camp at the mouth of Little Grizzly Creek, on Wood River, and hunt the hanging basins and creek heads. This is grand country—high, wild and open, with only a sparse fringe of spruce along the stream banks. On all sides the mighty snow peaks of the Alaska Range loom mile-high into the blue.

There are innumerable small creeks plunging down from the high glaciers, secret valleys tucked away between the shoulders of the hills, windy ridges where bands of white bighorn sheep and woodland caribou gather. And it is the finest grizzly country between Seward and the Endicotts. Count Tolstoy and I once saw eighteen grizzlies here in two weeks.

It is a good idea to do your hunting on horseback—you cover more ground in a day and have opportunity to watch the hillsides instead of your footing. When you have located a bear, anchor your horse to a boulder and crawl as close as you can before going into action. Try to put your shots into the chest cavity—a soft-nose through a grizzly's barrel won't keep him down. He'll roll over a few times, and claw up a lot of moss and earth; but the first thing you know, he'll snap out of it and start for distant places.

And when you have one down, put in an extra couple of shots for luck—the taxidermist can fix up the holes so that you would never know they were there—and then sit down for a cigarette.

Time enough to go over to the kill to have your photograph taken when you are absolutely sure that the bear is dead. An action photograph of you, trying to beat an Alaskan grizzly to a tree, will be small consolation to your wife and children if your guide has to ship you home in a box.

AN HOUR IN THE ATTIC¹

*Memories of days afield, of limpid waters
and rustling streams, make the winter months
much brighter for the angler who longs for
spring*

By R. BAILEY

BACK FROM COLLEGE for the Christmas vacation, I came one night to that rummaging, restless mood which inevitably seizes upon us during the dull days of winter waiting, when it seems as though the snows would never melt, the gray, sodden skies would never freshen, and the frost-bound brooks would never give way to the gentle whisperings of April. April! Month of joy, swelling buds, swollen streams and best of all, trout! April, would you never come?

With a start, I remembered a frayed winding on the third ferule of my fly rod. It was cozy and warm downstairs, seated before the fire, and comforting to feel the chill January wind whistling around the corners of the old house and the driven sleet beating in vain against the window panes. But somehow the words of my book blurred and lost their meaning; my pipe tasted bitter, hot and unpleasant, while the usually comfortable chair I was seated in suddenly developed a series of muscle-torturing hollows and other discomforts.

I got up, yawned and stretched, then sauntered leisurely up to

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my room. Arrived there I began to rummage through the closet for the rod case. But I couldn't find it anywhere. Where was it? Where was the old coat, the old felt hat with dilapidated specimens of Jock Scott, Silver Doctor and Montreal clinging wistfully to the brim? And the old hip boots and waders?

In consternation I yelled downstairs, "Mother! Where is my fishing tackle?"

"Why, let me see," came the reply. "I think I put all your old clothes up in the attic after you went back to college last fall."

I groaned. Up in the attic—cold, dark and dismal, and on a night like this! But I felt I had to see the old rod, the old coat and hat. Picking up a candlestick, I ascended the creaking, twisting old staircase and came to the attic.

The flickering light of the candle threw weird, grotesque shadows up among the rafters and through the piles of trunks and discarded suitcases that lay scattered over the dusty floor. A short search revealed the objects of my desire over in a dark corner. There was the rod case standing against the wall, and beside it the hip boots and waders, while suspended from the rafters by a rusty nail hung the old coat.

Setting the candle on top of a four-legged washstand minus one leg, I seated myself on a convenient steamer trunk and took down the old coat from its nail in the rafter, and put it on, for it was cold and raw up there in the attic and the added warmth of the coat felt grateful. I put my hand into a pocket and encountered an old, scarred pipe. Further search revealed a much-worn tobacco pouch containing a little of a package of cheap cut plug, purchased in a country store during the past summer. Meditatively I crammed the bowl of the pipe full of the tobacco and lit it.

How good that smoke tasted! I remembered the last time I had smoked that pipe. It was a late August afternoon, and I had been using the dry fly on as picturesque a stretch of water as existed in the East. Again I put my hand into a pocket, and this time drew forth a wrinkled old fly book and a small bottle of insect oil whose waning odor brought back poignant memories of green pines, rushing, swirling waters, and the hum of mid-summer insects.

And I remembered other days—June days and rapids fishing; days of July and August with the dry fly. Thumbing over the pages of the old fly book, I recalled quiet summer evenings—the golden dusk of dying sunsets behind screens of hemlock, and quiet waters at peace with the world. And I remembered sunrises, and curling wisps of mist rising from the surfaces of placid lakes. And the gleam of white waters greeting a rising sun.

And again, I saw an old moss-covered log extending out into the current of a stream, and I saw a rod whip back and forth, a line shoot forward, and a fly drop down lightly beside the old log into the swirling eddy. And I saw a gleam of light and a dream of color leap up from the black depths of the eddy and seize the fly. And I felt the pull of the rod, and heard the swish of the line running through the guides.

The candle flared, crackled and died. A fierce blast of wind shook the house. The windows rattled a staccato accompaniment to the mournful whistling of the wind, and the sleet beat against the panes. With a sigh, I knocked the cold ashes out of the pipe, and picking up the rod case started downstairs. But, somehow, April didn't seem so far away, after all.

LITTLE BENNY'S RUG¹

Hunting Rocky Mountain goats in the wilderness of central Idaho

By GLENN BALCH

THE OTHER DAY a mountain man brought me down a pure-white goat-skin rug, expertly cured and as soft and fluffy as it is possible for a goat skin to be. I packed it carefully for shipment and sent it to an address in Philadelphia. I didn't kill that goat, and I don't know the person to whom I sent the hide; but when the package had disappeared through the parcel-post window, insured far above its actual value, I had a feeling of pride and satisfaction in a job well done. And thereby hangs a tale.

It is a tale of Dad Lightfoot, my old mountaineer pal who had lived for nearly half a century in the big central Idaho wilderness. Dad surprised me by appearing in Boise one day last fall.

"You dog-gone old scalawag!" I greeted him affectionately, aware that the grip of his hard-knuckled brown old hand was paralyzing my arm from the elbow down. "What the devil are you doing here? Gosh, but I'm glad to see you!"

"Howdy, son." Dad usually addresses me that way, although we are not related except by a mutual love of the outdoors. "I'm in a jack-pot, an' you can help me out."

"Not the cops?" I asked, recalling a time when the old mountaineer's contempt for man-made laws had landed him in the

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hoosegow. It was there that I, news-hawking, met him and won his friendship by bridging the gap between his obstinacy and the police captain's forgiveness.

Dad chuckled indulgently. "Rub it in," he invited. "But it's somethin' else this time—somethin' much more important."

This mountain man has one of the most engaging personalities that I have ever come in contact with. The magnetism lies in his eyes. They are so startlingly clear and honest, so powerfully clean and capable and independent. They have a way of gazing into the far-off distances as if overlooking the trivial disappointments close at hand for the more important goal of a life well lived. This philosophy comes from close and intimate contact with nature, from a minimum of the worries and troubles that civilization strews in the path of us luxury chasers, and, perhaps most of all, from the gratification of a life lived in freedom of all but nature's laws.

Somehow I feel that Dad's scheme of things is the true life, the happy life; and that the rest of us are by our very struggles robbing ourselves of much that we struggle for. A superfluity of ambition, copybooks to the contrary notwithstanding, may be the reason for it.

"Come into the hotel," I said, taking his arm and steering him through the big swinging doors. "I'll buy you a glass of something zippy and a good cigar. Then you can tell me all about it."

"Good water—spring water if they've got it—is what I want," the old man declared. "An'," reaching into his pocket for his stubby old pipe, "I'll take a gin o' plug slice instead o' that seegar."

"Now," I said, after we were comfortably seated and Dad had his pipe going, "what's the trouble?"

The old fellow chuckled with mystifying satisfaction. "It ain't exactly trouble," he said. "It's a new arrival in the family."

"What!" I snorted. "Why, you old skinflint, you!"

"Hold yore hosses a minute," Dad interrupted. "Don't get me wrong. It's my niece's family. She lives back in Philadelphy."

"And how does that get you in trouble?" I asked.

The old man pulled a dirty envelope from his pocket and waved it jubilantly in my face.

"They named it Benjamin, after me," he said excitedly, his bronzed countenance shining with delight.

"Well," I asked, "what are you going to do about it?"

"That's what I want to know," he said. "What ought I to do about it? What's the proper thing? A man has got to do the proper thing when he becomes a godfather, ain't he?"

"Oh, so that's what's worrying you," I said, beginning to understand. "Why, just send your niece your congratulations, and little Benny a present."

"Golly, that's a relief," Dad said. "Now," he went on, "what are we goin' to get him?"

"We?" I raised my eyebrows.

"Yes, we!" he declared with emphasis on the pronoun. "I ain't wet-nursed you on big-game hunts an' cooked for you an' washed dishes after you for nothin', by gosh! You can't run out on me when I'm in a jam. You've got to see me through this thing."

I stared at the old man and saw that he was in dead earnest.

"Sure, Dad," I promised solemnly, "I'll stick by you."

"All right, then. The big question is, what are we goin' to get him?"

Suddenly I had an idea, a peach of an idea—one of the kind that kills two birds with one stone.

"A goat-skin rug," I said. "It's just the thing. Can't you just see the little cuss wallowing on a pure-white goat-skin rug?"

From the way Dad's eyes shone, I knew he could. "Betcha," he gloated, "no other kid in Philadelphia has got one."

"And I'll come up and kill it for you," I offered magnanimously. That was the second bird.

Old Dad has long since quit hunting, except on those very rare occasions when he gets an appetite for venison, but his clear gray eyes regarded me a little dubiously.

"Can you kill a goat with a metal-jacketed bullet so it won't damage the hide—just one shot, mind you?"

"Can you tan goat so the hair will smell like essence of lilacs

and the other side will be a skin you love to touch?" I shot back at him sharply.

The old fellow stuck out his big bone-crushing paw. "It's a bargain," he said. "Get yore gun and let's go."

By lantern light we saddled a couple of horses in the old pole corral at Dad's place, high in the mountains. I had done considerable hunting from that cabin, but never before with Dad. He always refused to go out with us, saying that he wasn't killing any more game, not for himself or anybody else, unless meat was needed. On this occasion, however, he was influenced by a mighty purpose, and I was thrilled at the prospect of having him along. Dad Lightfoot knows more about those big Idaho crags and the sheep and goats that live in them than any person I have ever met.

By nine o'clock we were climbing the skirts of a great craggy peak that thrust its saffron spirals and towers into the deep blue of the heavens. Dad kept Nell, his old saddle mare, pushing steadily upward through the tall spruce and fir.

"We're goin' to get the biggest dog-gone goat on that mountain," he declared happily. "We're goin' to send a hide back to little Benny that he can be proud of—one so danged big he'll have to roll over three times to get off the edge."

I was all for it. "Just show me the one you want, Dad," I instructed, "and I'll do the rest."

Dad wasn't carrying a gun; but a big hand-forged skinning knife, whetted to a hair-splitting keenness, was sheathed on his belt.

We came upon a black bear clawing a rotted log for grubs. He ambled away with a laughable mixture of dignity and apprehensiveness.

A mile or so farther on, Dad interrupted his low, tuneful whistling to ask me if I would like to see a moose. I replied that I would.

The old mountaineer turned sharply to the right, zigzagged over a low ridge and shortly pulled his horse to a halt in the concealment of an aspen thicket. We had stopped near the shore of a small lake so artfully hidden that one had to be almost in the water to see it.

"There's Annie an' her young-un'," he informed me in a soft undertone. "I don't see John; guess he's round on the other side o' the point, divin' for lily bulbs."

I peered through the screen and was almost dumfounded by the sight of a great cow moose, closely followed by a calf, feeding leisurely in the shallow water.

"Annie had twins last year," Dad informed me as he backed Nellie around and rode away.

"But I've always been told there weren't any moose in this section," I said.

"Yeah, I've been told that too," Dad replied, spitting contemptuously over an alder shrub.

Near timber-line the old mountaineer pulled his horse to a sudden halt and swung down out of the saddle.

"Bring yore gun," he whispered.

I followed at his heels, marveling that he could move so swiftly and carelessly and yet with so little noise. My own booted feet seemed to crush dry leaves and twigs every time I put them down.

On his belly, Dad wriggled like a snake through a chaparral thicket. The branches scratched at my face and pulled at my clothing, but eventually I reached a place beside him. He was peering cautiously through a thin screen of leaves, and as I paused I saw, through this screen, a dozen or more indistinct white bodies about one hundred and fifty yards away. Goats—mountain goats—as sure as I was alive!

I pulled my rifle hastily forward, thrust the muzzle through the screen and saw clearly, through the opening above the barrel, a big shaggy white form.

"Wait," Dad whispered.

After a long, nerve-racking minute, Dad startled me by speaking aloud.

"Our goat ain't in that bunch, son," he said, getting to his feet.

I got up in time to see the white forms vanish around the base of a cliff, trotting with superb indifference over sloping rock at the edge of a sheer drop of many feet.

"They look plenty good to me," I informed Dad.

He shook his head. "Not good enough for little Benny," he declared.

At timber-line we unsaddled the horses, hobbled them and turned them loose to graze on the rich bunch-grass.

"Never leave a hoss tied if you don't know how long it'll be 'fore you're comin' back," Dad informed me as he swung his saddle from a limb to keep it out of porcupines' way.

Up into the treeless area of great jumbled rocks, steep treacherous slides, crumbling ledge and frozen banks of dirty snow we went, old Dad Lightfoot leading the way with that long, swinging stride of his. How that man can cover rough country! He's several years more than twice my age, but within an hour's time the pace he set had me practically exhausted.

I had hunted this country previously with a friend, and we had progressed over it only with great difficulty, being frequently forced to retrace our steps and detour. But with Dad leading the way it was different; there was never a false start, rarely even a false step. With uncanny judgment the old man selected the routes of advance, winding under cliffs, scrambling up over rocks, swinging across level spots—never halting, never pausing, always upward.

It was magnificent country, this stronghold of the mountain goat—rough, rugged, harsh and unbelievably huge. Great fingers and pinnacles and upthrusts of granite flung themselves at the blue sky. Deep crevices, cañons and ravines gouged the face of the mountain; snowbanks snuggled beneath the north faces of overhanging cliffs. Treacherous shale-rock slides sloped away in innocent-looking toboggans of death.

Dad and I were like two tiny, insignificant insects crawling laboriously over the footstool of the gods. But still, owning in our own minds all the world that we could see about us and gloriously indifferent to our insignificance, we pushed on. And always Dad had his eyes peeled for a flash of white or a little imprint in the thin soil. I stumbled along behind, content that he should do the sleuthing and concentrating my powers on staying with him.

High up under the peak, Dad dropped to his knees and pointed

to a series of little heart-shaped tracks in the dust. A herd of goats had passed that way not long before.

"Got steel jackets in yore gun?" he asked in a whisper.

I nodded. Normally I refuse to use metal-jacketed ammunition for big game, but this was a special occasion.

"Come on, then, an' don't make no racket."

Wriggling on his stomach like a lizard, the old man moved forward over loose shale. Imitating his movements, I followed, thinking that there was little need for all this extreme caution, since the crest of the ridge was still a hundred yards away, and I doubted if there was anything on the other side of it anyhow. But when my rifle barrel carelessly clinked against a stone, he turned and gave me a fierce stare. A second later his boots were sliding forward again.

Twenty minutes passed before Dad, having carefully removed his hat, raised himself slowly, inch by inch, until he could see over the slight rise. Then he crooked a gnarled finger, inviting me forward.

I covered the few feet at a snail's pace and managed to arrive without any undue noise. Then I too, inch by inch, raised myself until, with hardly any more than my eyebrows showing, I could see over the ridge and into the little swale beyond. A gentle puff of wind in my face told me that the old man had carefully and judiciously selected his avenue of approach.

I shall never forget the scene that met my eyes. At that moment I would have given the old mountaineer credit for wizardry. It was a feat that I had tried many times—and always failed.

Feeding on the scanty vegetation in that little swale, down through the center of which trickled the meltings of a glacier, were a score or more of shaggy white forms. It was a family gathering, billies, nannies and kids all being present. Some were lying down, some were feeding; the youngsters were frolicking. Two young males butted each other playfully, serving notice of what could be expected when they attained the age of rivalry for favor of the young nannies. With lowered head a watchful mother chased a young billy away from her kid.

The goats were ninety or a hundred yards from us, and to all outward appearances were entirely unaware of our presence. Dad had engineered a perfect stalk, and for one of the few times in a fairly wide hunting experience I was having the supreme pleasure of observing big game in its natural habitat, when its behavior was uninfluenced by fear of humans. I treasure those few minutes of recollection infinitely more than the mounted head which I secured on a previous hunt.

I could have watched them for hours, but a twitch at my pants leg reminded me that we had not come merely to observe. Little Benny was to be considered.

"Which one do you want?" I whispered.

"The big one, of course," he replied.

"Which big one?"

"The old grandpap—the big fellow on guard over by the rock pile."

Cautiously I raised myself again; I hadn't seen any goat on guard. But now I did, and what a goat! He was by far the biggest of the band. His hair was long and thick; the dark spikes of horns were unusually heavy. And he maintained an attitude of aloofness from the rest of the band. Truly an old patriarch!

My heart was pounding. Cautiously I pushed my rifle forward and lowered my head to the stock. The watchful old fellow must have caught a gleam of the barrel, because his ears came forward. I had my sights centered on his chest, just inside the foreleg, where I figured the metal-jacketed slug would do the most damage to the heart and the least to the hide.

Suddenly, Dad whispered in my ear. "Say, who's godfather here, anyhow?"

I turned my head to look at him. The expression in his eyes was suddenly covetous. Without a word, I pushed the rifle over to him.

Dad almost smacked his lips as he cuddled the stock to his old cheek. I saw his finger curl about the trigger. The steady squeezing of an expert rifle shot began. Then I turned my head to watch the goats.

It seemed a long time before the rifle spoke. At the report the

scene before me erupted into violent action. White forms streaked for the protection of the rock maze, running with a peculiar choppy gallop. A young billy, in his frantic haste, attempted a sharp turn in some wet clay and landed heavily on his side, skidding to a halt. When he disappeared into the rocks, one side was plastered with yellow mud. A kid, deserted by its frightened mother, gazed about in wide-eyed wonder, trying to locate the source of that startling noise. Then, discovering that he was practically alone in the swale, he let out a dismayed bleat and ripped into an opening between two boulders.

But the old fellow on the higher rocks didn't run away. At the report of the rifle a shudder ran through his body. He made a single attempt to get to his feet, and then slowly settled back.

It is doubtful if the animal ever knew what struck him. Dad had placed his bullet with consummate skill. It entered the neck and smashed its way for a foot through the back-bone. Other than two small round holes the magnificent pelt didn't have a mark on it.

"Now there's a hide," old Dad Lightfoot said with deep satisfaction as he examined the carcass, "that little Benny can be proud of! Thank you, son, for comin' up an' gettin' it for me."

TIGERS OF THE MANITOWISH¹

*Old saw-toothed cannibals of the Wisconsin
lakes that lurked among bulrushes and under
sunken snags, ready to come charging out in
a savage rush*

By BERT CLAFLIN

WHOEVER CALLED the muskalonge the "tiger of the fresh waters" was a master of metaphor. *Esox masquinongy* is a fighter, a killer that never gives up until he is counted out, and he has plenty of power in every inch of his lithe body. Like the tiger of the jungle, he is tricky beyond belief. Call it intelligence—if a fish can be said to possess that attribute. Anyhow, no other denizen of our inland waters compares with a muskie in gameness and ability to perform acrobatic feats when on a hook—and few salt-water species of like size can give him a run for his money.

I speak from experience. For more than thirty years I have caught muskalonge wherever they were to be found—in all of the best waters of Wisconsin, where, acre for acre, they are by far the most plentiful; in three other states, and in the provinces of Canada, far in back of beyond. I have taken them on practically every artificial bait designed for their capture and offered for sale to an inquiring public; on lures made by myself from tips given me by the most famous Indian guides of the north country, who taught me much about the game, and on live and dead

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suckers in October and November, when the capricious cannibals prefer this kind of bait.

My diary, which I have kept assiduously for three decades, recounts the capture of forty-one of the tigers in a single season, every one of which was not only a keeper, but a good fish. The small ones were not counted. These fighters were taken chiefly in northern Wisconsin and Canada.

Late in the season of 1941, I set out on a trip for muskies in the famous Manitowish waters near the little backwoods town of Boulder Junction, Vilas County, Wisconsin. I had long known this network of lakes to be one of the most prolific on the continent—"a muskie for every hitch-hiker" is the slogan of the few but excellent resorts in that region.

I had never, however, made a concentrated effort to determine the actual possibilities over an extended period of time. It is well known that whoppers weighing up to 40 pounds and more are taken there, season after season; that 30-pounders are fairly common, and that specimens of 20 pounds are so plentiful as to cause no comment whatever when brought in. What I desired to learn definitely was how these Manitowish waters compare with others in northern Wisconsin.

From the town of Boulder Junction dozens of muskie lakes can be fished. And the roads to all of them are good—an angler's paradise. What I was most interested in on this particular trip was not to determine how many of these waters would produce muskies; I already knew that. My intention was to confine my fishing to the principal lakes which were drained by the Manitowish River. I did that with remarkable results.

Day after day, without let-up, White Sand, Boulder, Wold, Little Crooked, Wild Cat, High, Island and other waters were bombarded with plugs, buck-tailed spoons, metal wabblers and suckers. The response to these offerings far exceeded our expectations.

Upon arrival at Boulder Junction, Eddie was assigned to me as my first guide. And what a guide! Eddie, the man of few words,

but possessing a heap of muskie lore. I came to think he knew the middle name of every tiger in the Manitowish waters and just where it lived. He ran true to his reputation that the smashing strike of a tiger muskie, no matter what its size, would not cause Eddie even to raise his eyebrows. And, if you ask me, a man must be phlegmatic indeed who can keep his eyes in their sockets when one of those submarines comes to the surface and explodes in a whirlpool of foam, his jaws widely distended and his white teeth sawing at the leader.

Yes, Eddie was phlegmatic. He demonstrated that to me very soon after we reached the weed-beds in White Sand Lake.

"We'll get one today," he said in a matter-of-fact way. "One came up day before yesterday, but didn't take the bait. Cast into that open spot ahead. He's there."

A rather long statement for Eddie, whose speech usually resembles a Scotchman's telegram. I followed his suggestion. My lure was a surface plug having a red head. The instant it hit the water a long, brownish green body slit the surface, cavernous jaws wide open and, quicker than the eye could follow, took my lure down in a surge of foam. I yanked hard on the line, setting the hooks firmly.

Very calmly Eddie reached for his gun.

"Put the gat away," I said. "We don't want him. Too small."

"Fifteen pounds," said Eddie. "He'd suit most of the fellows I guide. Guess you've caught plenty of 'em."

In about ten minutes, by vigorous horsing, I succeeded in bringing the vicious fighter to the side of the boat. He was not defeated by any means, but momentarily quiescent, as is usually the way of a muskie after being on a hook for a few minutes. Undoubtedly he was wondering what would happen next.

During the interval Eddie's hand moved over the side of the boat and grasped the tricky tiger just in back of the gills. After weighing him the hooks were removed and, uninjured, the "little" scrapper slid back gently into his natural element. Eddie was not far off on the weight—14½ pounds.

Two hours elapsed before we had another rise. Not getting the desired results with artificial lures, Eddie suggested that I try casting with a sucker.

"It's well into October, you know," he offered as reason. "It may be just the right medicine for them."

I agreed, and he reached into the minnow bucket and brought one forth. We fastened a piece of line around its body, and the curve of the hook was passed through and impaled in the lips of the sucker. I was ready to go to work.

At the third cast one would think a stick of dynamite had exploded in the lake. The water boiled for twenty feet around the point of strike. The bait disappeared.

"You won't have to put that baby back," said Eddie, without the slightest trace of excitement in his voice. He shipped the oars and calmly lit a cigarette.

As must be done when using live or dead suckers for muskies, I stripped off line and awaited the killer's pleasure, knowing that after he had chewed it sufficiently he would undoubtedly gorge it, and then the fun would begin.

It did—much sooner than we expected. A surge to the surface, a leap clear of the water, a shower of silvery spray set my nerves a-tingling. It always does. Couldn't help it if I caught a 30-pounder every day of my life. And why try? It's the kick one gets out of muskie fishing that brings 10,000 anglers to Wisconsin from every state in the Union each summer for a fling at the fighting tigers.

This fish weighed an ounce over 28 pounds, a beautifully striped specimen. We couldn't have sent him back home had we wished to. He would not have survived the operation necessary to remove the hook.

And right here let me say that's why I prefer using artificial lures to live bait. I do not fish for the meat. It's the thrills I want. At least nine out of every ten muskies I catch go back to their native element. Fortunately, as intimated, it is only in late fall when the waters are cold that muskies take live bait to any extent.

The next day I elected to fish Little Crooked Lake, one of the

very prolific waters of the Manitowish chain. Larry guided me. He had had forty years' experience in that region and was possessed of an uncanny ability as a muskie fisherman. Guiding is not his profession, but he volunteered his services, and I very gladly accepted them. In all my travels I have never met another man who could cast a lure farther or more accurately. Larry shoots 'em out as a whale gun does a harpoon.

We raised muskie after muskie on the bars and in the deeply shaded spots along the brushy shore-lines. We hooked and landed six and released them all. It was a great workout.

As I broke bread with Larry that evening he pointed toward a mounted fish on the wall.

"That old cannibal there weighed 22 pounds," he explained. "Not a record-breaker by any means, but he has a history. He was caught in Round Lake on another muskie!"

I looked at Larry, not in doubt, but wonderingly. I am prepared at all times to believe anything about a muskie.

"Yep, on another muskie," he went on. "The fisherman who brought him in had hooked a smaller one—about a 5-pounder. Anyhow, one that measured nearly two feet in length. He was reeling it in when this old tiger struck. It swallowed the smaller fish in a hurry. It wasn't even hooked, but it was landed. Muskies pull off some queer stunts, you know."

When Larry told me of a 19-pounder that had swallowed a live hell-diver, I believed that too, for verily I have taken from their stomachs young mergansers, chipmunks, field mice and even small turtle, shell and all!

I made my diary entries as we sat talking. It's a ritual with me, and it is never neglected. Very soon I was yawning. Larry noticed it and showed me to my room without delay. Within five minutes I was dead to the world. No Egyptian mummy ever slept sounder than a muskie fisherman does in that pure, balsam-scented ozone of the north country. Nor are osteopaths in demand.

You get enough "daily dozens" on one trip to last you for months thereafter. Every muscle in your body gets a workout. Some of them may complain strenuously about the second day, after you

have heaved lures a million times. You'll be plenty sore, especially if you have been a bit lazy during the previous weeks, but it's a healthy feeling nevertheless. And you'll be ready for the pancakes in the morning, and every morning. You'll give no thought to vitamin B. You'll be chiefly interested in filling up—with anything substantial. Take it from one who has been there.

Muskie fishing differs in many ways from other angling. One thing greatly in its favor is that you don't have to start out early in the morning. The tigers hit best between about 9 A.M. and 4 P.M. The contention of some anglers that just before dark—even after twilight has fallen—is the "suicide hour" is not borne out by my years of experience. In fact, I do not actually know of one ever having been caught at night.

I was much pleased the following morning when Espen, a friend of former days, showed up at Larry's and suggested that we give Wolf Lake a whirl.

"They're hitting there—whoppers," he enthused. "By the way, what test line are you using?"

"Twenty pounds," I informed him. "I never use anything heavier for lake fishing. Flowage waters are, of course, different with their snags."

"Well, you should know," he agreed reluctantly. "But I had an old sockdolager smash a 24-pound line a couple of days ago on Wolf. He went through it like he would a cobweb. I'm using a clothes-line now for the devils."

That was most encouraging. We lost no time in shoving off for Wolf Lake. What pleased me upon arrival there was to learn that Eddie would handle my boat. At the dock, waiting for us, was genial Joe Alexander, good-will ambassador for the Wisconsin Conservation Department and a muskie fisherman of rare ability. "Happy Ralph" was to guide him.

As soon as Espen, who is an amateur photographer of parts, had his motion-picture paraphernalia ready in another boat we started.

"We'll surely do business today," commented Eddie tersely. The low-hanging clouds presaged rain. It was delightfully warm

for October—Indian summer, in fact—for stringy cobwebs floated over the lake. Disturbed by our presence, an eagle left its perch on the top of a high conifer and with a scream of displeasure sailed majestically away. The leaves of the hardwoods along the shores presented their dark red, and the aspens pure gold. Truly, fall is the ideal time of the year to be in the north country.

My buck-tailed No. 7 spoon shot out and landed with a "whop" seventy-five feet from the boat. I brought it in slowly and sent it out again immediately. You can't cast too often nor disturb the water too much when you're after muskies. They like action of a pronounced kind. Some anglers with outboard motors, before they make a cast, run their boats at top speed around and around a bar which they intend to fish. I've never favored such action. I prefer to let my lure furnish the disturbance.

Within ten minutes we saw our first fish. But he did not hit. Evidently he had followed the sucker which my guide was using, for he suddenly appeared alongside our boat. He looked as long as an oar! We described figure 8's with our lures, but he swam away leisurely. "Boy, that was an old sawtooth," said Eddie. "I've seen him several times of late. Showed him everything in my tackle box, but he's too foxy to hit anything."

We moved closer to the shore-line and shot our lures in among the lily-pads. Suddenly the lake exploded. My bucktail disappeared in a maelstrom of black water and roily foam. Upon feeling the prick of the hooks this old villain leaped, shook the deception until the spoon rattled audibly, and then, after a run of fifty feet, dived to the bottom, where he sulked, not minding in the least my vain pumping of the line to raise him.

Eddie rowed quickly to a point directly over the old warrior. This enabled me to start him. He came up and passed under the boat, an act that often spells disaster when a muskie is involved. But the adeptness of my guide saved the day. A quick move, and he succeeded in sliding the line out beneath the stern of the craft. A moment later old *Esox* broke the surface within a yard of us, jaws wide open and eyes glaring in a most disconcerting manner. Then, notwithstanding the heavy tension I kept on the line, he

shot away for a hundred feet. During the ensuing fifteen minutes, although I was kept very busy all the time, we had not a glimpse of the tiger. That showed he was a big one.

Eddie had his watch out, timing the performance.

"He's a good one," was the only comment that he made, but he burned up two cigarettes while I played the desperate villain.

Presently we heard the hum of Espen's motor. Arriving at a point near us, he lost no time in getting into action with his motion-picture camera. Had old Esox been trained to perform, he could not have put on a better show. Half the time he was in the air in beautiful curves, shaking his head viciously, lashing his red tail from side to side, and plunging beneath the surface, where he agitated the water like a depth bomb.

He fought long and hard, but eventually his steel-like muscles gave to the strain. I led him to the boat, his huge body rolling sullenly. He was licked physically, but his glaring eyes still declared his spirit unconquered. We brought him aboard. The scale showed 33 pounds! That Wolf Lake is one of the leading muskie waters in northern Wisconsin is evident from the fact that on this trip I landed four of the tigers, three on artificial lures and one on an 11-inch sucker. All whoppers, as Espen had called them. Not a fish under 25 pounds, and all taken in one day.

After a good night's sleep we turned our batteries loose on Wild Cat Lake. Muskies everywhere, and accommodating ones. It mattered little what we offered them. Strikes followed one another regularly—along the bars, in the shadows of the shore-lines, at the edges of the weed-beds. Large specimens and small ones. But do not misunderstand me. We worked hard for them. We covered miles of water, and we cast steadily hour after hour, save for the brief interval taken out for a shore lunch. You must make up your mind to do that if you would meet with success in muskie fishing. And even then the red gods may not favor you. Call old Esox a patrician if you will. I prefer to pronounce him a sulky, morose villain who hates his fellow creatures and lives only for himself. Take for example one characteristic. When he attains the weight of, say, 20 pounds, he more often than not "takes up a

claim" in a lake where his natural prey is plentiful. And he remains there indefinitely, unless caught. Therefore, to find his lair, you must literally comb the water. But when you do, unknowingly perhaps, stumble on to such a spot, he may scorn your offerings entirely. One never knows what a muskie will do. It is the suspense accompanying the sport of seeking him that makes it alluring.

Often he will come up with a rush and deliberately miss your bait, but it will be intentional. Or he may smash it the instant it touches the water. Again he may follow it to your boat, stop in plain sight, fix his baleful eyes on you for a few moments, and then sink backward out of sight or disappear in a whirl of foam, throwing water all over you.

High Lake was our next objective. Much of its bottom is covered with vegetation, the tops of which seldom reach the surface. High Lake is an ideal muskie water, as subsequent events proved. We hooked, landed and released six of the big fighters in five hours. But before they went free we weighed and photographed them. To accomplish this without injury to the fish, we used a large landing net.

We hit Boulder Lake the following afternoon. It had turned rather cold; hence at the suggestion of Syd and Harvey, who acted as our guides, we used suckers for bait. A two-handed rod—and a stiff one—must be used with these heavy baits. I have said I don't like to use the messy things, and I repeat it. Altogether too much work; and besides, it calls for the patience of an Indian. When a tiger does take one, you might as well resign yourself to watchful waiting.

He may decide to gorge the sucker within a few minutes, and yet an hour may elapse before he makes up his mind. When he does take it in, you'll know what real action is with a rod and line if he's a large one, for he will come up fast and fighting mad. And that's the time to drive the hook home. Even then you will not always be successful in setting it.

One of the big ones—a fish that would easily weigh 30 pounds—that took my sucker on Boulder Lake had it for twenty-five minutes by the watch before he decided to swallow it. Then he

shot to the surface in a nerve-racking rush and leaped fully three feet into the air. I yanked hard on the line, but he disgorged the bait and was free.

Boulder Lake has long been known as a natural home for big muskies, the vicious tackle-smashing kind. You may raise one at the big weed-bed out in the center of the lake, anywhere along the shores of the extensive bays, or near the exit of the Manitowish River, which flows from Boulder into Big Crooked Lake. From the opening of the season on May 25 until the water freezes over late in the fall huge specimens are taken daily in this key water of the Manitowish chain. I have caught them there as late as the fifteenth of November, and in a heavy snow-storm!

Under the guidance of genial John we worked Island Lake the following day. John has spent his entire forty years of life on this fine body of water, following in the footsteps of his father, a pioneer with a fine reputation and a woodsman of unexcelled ability. John knows every inch of Island Lake and just where to find muskies. With him at the helm we hooked, fought, landed, weighed and released many fine specimens. The day was a full one.

After a night with John at his home on Island Lake we pulled out—full of regret at leaving this scene of action. We had caught the tigers until we actually grew weary of the sport. Strike, fight, land, release—that had been the order of the day. We'll be back there when every season rolls around.

Thirteen of the largest muskies taken by us in the seven lakes fished weighed 299 pounds—an average of 23 pounds per fish. The largest pulled the scale arrow down to 33 pounds, and the smallest to 17.

The muskialonge is predacious and cannibalistic to a high degree. Chiefly, he lives in fairly deep water; by that I mean from fifteen to twenty feet, although at times I have caught them on shallow bars where they had come to bask in the sun on the surface, or to feed upon smaller fish, such as rock bass, perch and walleyes. The tigers are well equipped for this, having extremely large mouths and tough jaws armed with a formidable array of

sharp, conical teeth from one-half to about three-quarters of an inch in length.

A peculiarity of the muskalonge is his solitary habits. He lurks in underwater vegetation, among bulrushes and sunken snags, where for hours at a time he remains quiet, but keenly alert, the only perceptible movement being a slow fanning of his fins. However, let another fish approach, and instantly there is a plunging, churning dive at the invader, and a tragedy of the silent places occurs. I have not infrequently caught big northern pike which carried scars and sometimes wounds several inches in length, undoubtedly the result of attacks by muskies.

When landing one of these tigers by hand, it is advisable to wear a glove. Their teeth and sharp gill covers are poisonous. I say that upon the advice of a well-known surgeon whose life I saved by rushing him to a hospital after he had suffered a badly lacerated thumb which had come in contact with the teeth of a big muskalonge.

Further, if you have a weak heart, do not go after the tigers. Their impetuosity, lightning-like movements, and unparalleled power are very disturbing. I do not aver that a muskie will deliberately bite a human being, but I would not put it past him. A well-authenticated case has been reported to me of one that did seize his captor by a leg after it had been hauled into a boat on a Minnesota lake, causing a bad wound.

Notwithstanding their ferocity, bulldog strength and stamina, muskies can be handled safely on ordinary rods weighing as little as 5½ ounces or perhaps less, depending upon the skill and experience of the angler. I have caught them on a fly rod weighing no more. In one afternoon on a tributary of the Manitowish River I landed six of the tigers on a rod of this kind. But in doing it I walked a trail along the shore, which, as in salmon fishing, gave me a decided advantage.

The largest of these six fish weighed only 12 pounds. A lot of fish and plenty of action, however, for a fly rod, I assure you. I do not advise a tyro who values his rod to try it.

In the matter of lures it is their action rather than their color

that brings strikes from muskies. In fact, they will hit anything from a game warden's badge to a silver-mounted, pot-bellied billiken if it gyrates freely. I'll let you in on a secret. One of the most effective lures I ever used for big muskies before the approach of fall was a plug which I made from a hint given me by an Ojibway Indian who guided me for seven years and knew his muskies. Its body was constructed of cedar and enameled yellow with small black spots. To this body, by a peculiar arrangement, I attached buckskin fins and tail, their action being very lifelike in the water. Altogether it made a most vicious-looking contraption, but one which spelled the doom of many a monstrous tiger of the fresh waters.

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